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TORONTO

Narratives from  
The History of  
the Decline and Fall of  
the Roman Empire

By Edward Gibbon

(First Series)

*Selected and Edited by*

J. H. Fowler, M.A.

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**NOTE.—A second volume of selections, dealing with the  
Byzantine Empire, is proposed.**



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INTRODUCTION.

I. GIBBON'S LIFE.

THERE are few English men of letters so well known to us as EDWARD GIBBON. This is because he left behind him a sketch—or rather several drafts of a sketch—of his life. In it he has not merely recorded events, but the impressions that events made upon him, the growth of his mind and affections, the influence of friends and of books. It is one of the most charming pieces of autobiography in the language, and if it does not win our unreserved affection for its author—if we miss in him some of the qualities that we love and esteem most heartily—we can scarcely read it without learning to admire not only his splendid powers of intellect, but his candour to us and his faithfulness to his friends.

He was born at Putney, April 27, 1737, the son of a country gentleman. A very delicate child, he underwent no strict discipline in his early years: "compassion always suggested an excuse for the indulgence of the master or the idleness of the pupil." For a time he was at Westminster School, where his devoted aunt, Miss Catherine Porter, opened a dame's house for the express purpose, apparently, of receiving her nephew as a pupil. In his fifteenth year—after he had been withdrawn from Westminster on account of ill-health—his constitution strengthened, and he was sent to Magdalen College, Oxford, arriving there "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed." He owed little to Oxford. The duty of instructing the undergraduates was neglected by the Fellows of Magdalen, and Gibbon, who

would quickly have responded to an inspiring tutor, wasted his time. Such reading as he pursued led to his deciding prematurely to join the Church of Rome, and in consequence he was expelled from the University. His father then sent him to a Swiss Protestant pastor at Lausanne. M. Pavilliard was a helpful teacher, and Gibbon now began to acquire knowledge rapidly. He had already begun to think for himself. In a while he came back of his own accord to Protestantism, but gradually lost all faith in religion. Almost the only bias that mars the splendid impartiality of his History is a prejudice against Christianity, which leads him, in the words of his admirer Byron, to "sap a solemn creed with solemn sneer." At Lausanne he fell in love with Mlle. Curchod, who was "learned without pedantry, lively in conversation, pure in sentiment and elegant in manners." Gibbon's father disapproved the match. Edward "sighed as a lover, obeyed as a son," and Mlle. Curchod afterwards married M. Necker, the eminent French minister of finance.

Returning to England in 1758, Gibbon held a commission in the Hampshire militia for two years. Thus he acquired some knowledge of military matters and the military point of view, and "the captain of the Hampshire grenadiers was not useless to the historian of the Roman Empire."

After this he went abroad again, and paid his memorable visit to Rome. "It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind." "Twenty happy years," as he says in concluding the Memoirs of his Life and Writings, were "animated by the labour of my history." They were passed partly in London, and partly in Lausanne. "It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden [at Lausanne]. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berecan*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of

the country, the lake and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

Gibbon continued to live at Lausanne till 1793, when he returned to England on account of the illness of his friend, Lord Sheffield, who, however, survived him and published his *Miscellaneous Writings*. Gibbon died in London, January 16, 1794.

## II. HIS BOOK.

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire—the passing away of the old European civilisation and the birth of the new—has been called the greatest event in human history. The book which records it is, on the whole, the greatest achievement in historical literature. In some of the finest qualities of a historian—power of description, love of truth, impartiality—one ancient writer, Thucydides, is as great as Gibbon; and historical science has made such advances since Gibbon's time, especially in its investigation into the causes of events, that his analysis now seems inadequate. But neither before nor since has one man ever carried out successfully so colossal a literary undertaking as was accomplished by Gibbon, when, with infinite skill and pains, he traced out from scattered and imperfect materials the story of Europe from the close of the second century of the Christian era to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

The attentive reader of the selections given in this little book will be able to form some conception of "the greatest event in human history." The narrative of Aurelian's triumph

will convey to him some sense of "the grandeur that was Rome," and it will be strange if he is not stirred by the image of a Roman pageant, such as at "the heart-shaking sound of Consul Romanus" filled the dreams of the English Opium-Eater. In the picture of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, the veil is lifted for a moment from one of the last of the ancient civilisations in the instant when, glorious still, it was doomed to vanish away for ever. The romantic figure of Julian, warrior, devotee, ruler and sage, reveals one who in the darkness of Paganism showed a faithfulness to high ideals that may put to shame many of the disciples of a purer faith. We see the old creed, in its death-struggle, acquiring something of the nobility and exaltation of the new. Next, Gibbon, here following closely in the steps of Ammianus Marcellinus, elaborates for us a sketch of Rome at the beginning of the fifth century—the "eternal city" living on the memories of past greatness, corrupt, luxurious, impotent. Her cup of iniquity is full, and the barbarian conqueror is already at her gates. Alaric the Goth and Attila the Hun are made real to us, and we see the devastation of Italy and the ruin out of which, the old order yielding place to new, the fair state of Venice was to arise. By contrast with the ordered majesty of Rome we have a vision of the wild court of Attila, the lurid scene of bridal and death that fired the imagination of Meredith.

" Square along the couch, and stark,  
Like the sea-rejected thing  
Sea-sucked white, behold their King.  
Attila, my Attila ! . . .  
Him they see an oak in bud,  
Him an oaklog stripped of bark :  
Him, their lord of day and night,  
White, and lifting up his blood  
Dumb for vengeance. Name us that,  
Huddled in the corner dark,  
Humped and grinning like a cat. . . .  
Death, who dares deny her guilt !  
Death, who says his blood she spilt !  
Make the bed for Attila ! "

Finally, in the fable of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, we read a parable of the change that, by almost imperceptible steps, two centuries had brought upon the world—the passing away of ancient power and ancient faith, the arising of “new men, strange faces, other minds.”

### III. A NOTE ON GIBBON'S STYLE.

In the memoirs, Gibbon has an interesting passage on his own style. “The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation : three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect.”

Among the qualities of Gibbon's own mind reflected in his style we may remark :—(1) a certain *staleness*: this is saved from pomposity both by the greatness of his theme and by the excellence of his matter, but not wholly saved from stiffness: he seems always to be writing in full dress; (2) *humour*—allowed more play in the notes, but occasionally revealing itself in the text, as in the account of a battle “marked by a considerable loss of satraps and elephants, perhaps of equal value in the eyes of their monarch” (p. 37); (3) *caustic wit*, showing itself in his immortal epigrams (cp. 73. 12-16, 80. 11-15); (4) *judicial balance*, illustrated by the antithetical form into which he loves to cast his sentences: e.g. “The offence was soon forgot, but the punishment was remembered” (4. 1); “The neighbouring states dreaded her enmity and solicited her alliance” (4. 32). This last feature of Gibbon's style was imitated by Macaulay, who has been called, though somewhat unfairly, “a popular nineteenth-century Gibbon.”

As for the “choice and command of language,” the reader should note :—(1) the frequent use of *abstract substantives* in place of verbs or adjectives—e.g. “Her strict economy was

accused of avarice" (4. 29); "every victory of his reign fortified superstition by gratitude" (16. 31); (2) the large proportion of *Latinisms* as compared with modern English; (3) the frequent instances in which words are used in a sense differing from their modern use—e.g. manners, seasonable, image, allege, insensible, discover, artful, derivation, affect, ensign: most of these words are of Latin origin, and Gibbon's use is nearer than our own to the proper sense of the Latin word; (4) the effectiveness of the *epithets*, chosen with elaborate care, and often condensing a judgment or description or piece of information into a single adjective.

In the structure of sentences, Gibbon is more *periodic* than a modern writer; *i.e.*, subordinate clauses are not 'tacked on' at the end of the principal sentence but inserted into the body of it, or even put first—e.g. "When they were introduced into his presence they declared, perhaps in a more lofty style than became their abject condition, that the Romans were resolved to maintain their dignity, either in peace or war" (68. 12-17). Cp. 72. 25-73. 2.

commanded the Pompeian fleet in the year of the battle of Pharsalia. Cæsar, with his characteristic magnanimity, had not only forgiven him for his opposition, but had raised him to high offices of state, and had promised him still further advancement. The most noted participant in the plot was Marcus Junius Brutus, who, after having become a partisan of Pompey, the murderer of his father, and his successful rival in love, had also been pardoned and promoted by Cæsar. These, with others to the number of sixty, arranged a plan for the assassination of their benefactor in the senate-house, on the Ides of March, B.C. 44. On that fatal day, the conspirators, true to their bloody undertaking, assembled in the Pompeian Curia, and there struck down with their ignoble daggers the foremost man of all the world.

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## I.

## AURELIAN AND ZENO比亚.

THESE are two of the most splendid and romantic names in later Roman history. The Empire seemed to be already falling to pieces when Aurelian came to the throne in 270 A.D. Gaul, Spain, and Britain had separated themselves from Italy, and were governed by a ruler of their own; the Alemanni and Franks were breaking into the Empire from behind the Rhine frontier, and the still more formidable Goths from behind the Danube; whilst in the east, Persia was recovering power under the new Sassanid dynasty, and nearer than Persia, the new kingdom of Palmyra was gathering strength. In his brief reign of less than five years (270-275) Aurelian restored unity by his victories and won the title of *Restitutor Orbis*, "Restorer of the World."

In the earlier part of ch. xi. Gibbon recounts the treaty of Aurelian with the Goths, his victories over the Alemanni, who even dared to invade Italy, and over Tetricus the Gaulish usurper, and his building of the wall of Rome. Our extract tells the story of his conquest of Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, of the triumph that followed his victories, and of his assassination.

20

AURELIAN had no sooner secured the person and provinces of Tetricus, than he turned his arms against Zenobia, the celebrated queen of Palmyra and the East. Modern Europe has produced several illustrious women

A.D. 272.  
Character of  
Zenobia;

e

who have sustained with glory the weight of empire; nor is our own age destitute of such distinguished characters. But if we except the doubtful achievements of Semiramis, Zenobia is perhaps the only female whose superior genius broke through the servile indolence imposed on her sex by the climate and manners of Asia. She claimed her descent from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, equalled in beauty her ancestor Cleopatra, and far surpassed that princess in chastity and <sup>her beauty and valour.</sup> Zenobia was esteemed the most learning; lovely as well as the most heroic of her sex. She was of dark complexion (for in speaking of a lady these trifles become important). Her teeth were of a pearly whiteness, and her large black eyes sparkled with uncommon fire, tempered by the most attractive sweetness. Her voice was strong and harmonious. Her manly understanding was strengthened and adorned by study. She was not ignorant of the Latin tongue, but possessed in equal perfection the Greek, the Syriac, and the Egyptian languages. She had drawn up for her own use an epitome of oriental history, and familiarly compared the beauties of Homer and Plato under the tuition of the sublime Longinus.

This accomplished woman gave her hand to Odenathus, who from a private station raised <sup>himself to the dominion of the East.</sup> She soon became the friend and companion of a hero. In the intervals of war, Odenathus passionately delighted in the exercise of hunting; he pursued with ardour the wild beasts of the desert,

lions, panthers, and bears; and the ardour of Zenobia in that dangerous amusement was not inferior to his own. She had injured her constitution to fatigue, disdained the use of a covered carriage, generally appeared on horseback in a military habit, and sometimes marched several miles on foot at the head of the troops. The success of Odenathus was in a great measure ascribed to her incomparable prudence and fortitude. Their splendid victories over the Great <sup>10</sup> King, whom they twice pursued as far as the gates of Ctesiphon, laid the foundations of their united fame and power. The armies which they commanded, and the provinces which they had saved, acknowledged not any other sovereigns than their invincible chiefs. The senate and people of Rome revered a stranger who had avenged their captive emperor, and even the insensible son of Valerian accepted Odenathus for his legitimate colleague.

After a successful expedition against the Gothic <sup>20</sup> plunderers of Asia, the Palmyrenian prince returned to the city of Emesa in Syria. Invincible <sup>She revenges  
her husband's  
death,</sup> in war, he was there cut off by domestic treason, and his favourite amusement of hunting was the cause, or at least the occasion, of his death. His nephew, Mæonius, presumed to dart his javelin before that of his uncle; and, though admonished of his error, repeated the same insolence. As a monarch and as a sportsman, Odenathus was provoked: took away his horse, <sup>30</sup> a mark of ignominy among the barbarians, and chastised the rash youth by a short confinement.

The offence was soon forgot, but the punishment was remembered; and Maenius, with a few daring associates, assassinated his uncle in the midst of a great entertainment. Herod, the son of Odenathus, though not of Zenobia, a young man of a soft and effeminate temper, was killed with his father. But Maenius obtained only the pleasure of revenge by this bloody deed. He had scarcely time to assume the title of Augustus, before he was sacrificed by Zenobia to the memory of her husband.

With the assistance of his most faithful friends, she immediately filled the vacant throne, and <sup>and reign over</sup> governed with manly counsels Palmyra, <sup>the East and</sup> Egypt, Syria, and the East, above five years.

By the death of Odenathus, that authority was at an end which the senate had granted him only as a personal distinction; but his martial widow, disdaining both the senate and Gallienus, obliged <sup>to</sup> one of the Roman generals, who was sent against her, to retreat into Europe, with the loss of his army and his reputation. Instead of the little passions which so frequently perplex a female reign, the steady administration of Zenobia was guided by the most judicious maxims of policy. If it was expedient to pardon, she could calm her resentment; if it was necessary to punish, she could impose silence on the voice of pity. Her strict economy was accused of avarice; yet on <sup>to</sup> every proper occasion she appeared magnificent and liberal. The neighbouring states of Arabia, Armenia, and Persia, dreaded her enmity, and

solicited her alliance. To the dominions of Odenatus, which extended from the Euphrates to the frontiers of Bithynia, his widow added the inheritance of her ancestors, the populous and fertile kingdom of Egypt. The emperor Claudius acknowledged her merit, and was content that, while *he* pursued the Gothic war, *she* should assert the dignity of the empire in the East. The conduct, however, of Zenobia was attended with some ambiguity; nor is it unlikely that she had conceived the design of erecting an independent and hostile monarchy. She blended with the popular manners of Roman princes the stately pomp of the courts of Asia, and exacted from her subjects the same adoration that was paid to the successors of Cyrus. She bestowed on her three sons a Latin education, and often showed them to the troops adorned with the Imperial purple. For herself she reserved the diadem, with the splendid but doubtful title of Queen of the East. 20

When Aurelian passed over into Asia, against an adversary whose sex alone could render her an object of contempt, his presence restored The Expedi-  
tion of Aure-  
lian, A.D. 270. obedience to the province of Bithynia, already shaken by the arms and intrigues of Zenobia. Advancing at the head of his legions, he accepted the submission of Ancyra, and was admitted into Tyana, after an obstinate siege, by the help of a perfidious citizen. The generous though fierce temper of Aurelian abandoned the traitor to the rage of the soldiers: a superstitious reverence induced him to treat with lenity the

countrymen of Apollonius the philosopher. Antioch was deserted on his approach, till the emperor, by his salutary edicts, recalled the fugitives, and granted a general pardon to all who, from necessity rather than choice, had been engaged in the service of the Palmyrenian queen. The unexpected mildness of such a conduct reconciled the minds of the Syrians, and, as far as the gates of Emesa, the wishes of the people seconded the terror of his <sup>10</sup> arms.

Zenobia would have ill deserved her reputation, had she indolently permitted the emperor of the West to approach within a hundred miles of her capital. The fate of the East was decided in two great battles ; so similar in almost every circumstance that we can scarcely distinguish them from each other, except by observing that the first was fought near Antioch, and the second near Emesa.  
The emperor defeats the Palmyrenians in the battles of Antioch and Emesa.  
In both, the queen of Palmyra animated the armies by her presence, and devolved the execution of her orders on Zabdus, who had already signalized his military talents by the conquest of Egypt. The numerous forces of Zenobia consisted for the most part of light archers, and of heavy cavalry clothed in complete steel. The Moorish and Illyrian horse of Aurelian were unable to sustain the ponderous charge of their antagonists. They fled in real or affected disorder, engaged the Palmyrenians in a laborious pursuit, harassed them by a desultory combat, and at length discomfited this impenetrable but unwieldy

body of cavalry. The light infantry, in the meantime, when they had exhausted their quivers, remaining without protection against a closer onset, exposed their naked sides to the swords of the legions. Aurelian had chosen these veteran troops, who were usually stationed on the Upper Danube, and whose valour had been severely tried in the Alemannic war. After the defeat of Emesa, Zenobia found it impossible to collect a third army. As far as the frontier of Egypt, the nations subject to her empire had joined the standard of the conqueror, who detached Probus, the bravest of his generals, to possess himself of the Egyptian provinces. Palmyra was the last resource of the widow of Odenathus. She retired within the walls of her capital, made every preparation for a vigorous resistance, and declared, with the intrepidity of a heroine, that the last moment of her reign and of her life should be the same.

Amid the barren deserts of Arabia, a few cultivated spots rise like islands out of the sandy ocean. Even the name of Tadmor, or The state of Palmyra. Palmyra, by its signification in the Syriac as well as in the Latin language, denoted the multitude of palm trees which afforded shade and verdure to that temperate region. The air was pure, and the soil, watered by some invaluable springs, was capable of producing fruits as well as corn. A place possessed of such singular advantages, and situated at a convenient distance, between the Gulf of Persia and the Mediterranean, was soon frequented by the caravans which con-

veyed to the nations of Europe a considerable part of the rich commodities of India. Palmyra insensibly increased into an opulent and independent city, and, connecting the Roman and the Parthian monarchies by the mutual benefits of commerce, was suffered to observe an humble neutrality, till at length, after the victories of Trajan, the little republic sunk into the bosom of Rome, and flourished more than one hundred and fifty years in the subordinate though honourable rank of a colony. It was during that peaceful period, if we may judge from a few remaining inscriptions, that the wealthy Palmyrenians constructed those temples, palaces, and porticos of Grecian architecture, whose ruins, scattered over an extent of several miles, have deserved the curiosity of our travellers. The elevation of Odenathus and Zenobia appeared to reflect new splendour on their country, and Palmyra for a while stood forth the rival of Rome: but the competition was fatal, and ages of prosperity were sacrificed to a moment of glory.

In his march over the sandy desert, between Emesa and Palmyra, the Emperor Aurelian was

It is besieged perpetually harassed by the Arabs; nor by Aurelian, could he always defend his army, and especially his baggage, from these flying troops of active and daring robbers, who watched the moment of surprise, and eluded the slow pursuit of the legions. The siege of Palmyra was an object far more difficult and important, and the emperor, who with incessant vigour pressed the

attacks in person, was himself wounded with a dart. "The Roman people," says Aurelian, in an original letter, "speak with contempt of the war which I am waging against a woman. They are ignorant both of the character and of the power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations, of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons. Every part of the walls is provided with two or three *balistæ*, and artificial fires are thrown from her military engines.<sup>10</sup> The fear of punishment has armed her with a desperate courage. Yet still I trust in the protecting deities of Rome, who have hitherto been favourable to all my undertakings." Doubtful, however, of the protection of the gods, and of the event of the siege, Aurelian judged it more prudent to offer terms of an advantageous capitulation: to the queen, a splendid retreat; to the citizens, their ancient privileges. His proposals were obstinately rejected, and the refusal was<sup>20</sup> accompanied with insult.

The firmness of Zenobia was supported by the hope that in a very short time famine would compel the Roman army to repass the desert; and by the reasonable expectation that the kings of the East, and particularly the Persian monarch, would arm in the defence of their most natural ally. But fortune and the perseverance of Aurelian overcame every obstacle. The death of Sapor, which<sup>30</sup> happened about this time, distracted the councils of Persia, and the inconsiderable succours that

who becomes  
master of  
Zenobia and  
of the city.

attempted to relieve Palmyra, were easily intercepted either by the arms or the liberality of the emperor. From every part of Syria, a regular succession of convoys safely arrived in the camp, which was increased by the return of Probus with his victorious troops from the conquest of Egypt. It was then that Zenobia resolved to fly. She mounted the fleetest of her dromedaries, and had already reached the banks of the Euphrates, about

10 sixty miles from Palmyra, when she was overtaken by the pursuit of Aurelian's light horse, seized,

<sup>A.D. 273.</sup> and brought back a captive to the feet of the emperor. Her capital soon afterwards surrendered, and was treated with unexpected lenity. The arms, horses, and camels, with an immense treasure of gold, silver, silk, and precious stones, were all delivered to the conqueror, who, leaving only a garrison of six hundred archers, returned to Emesa, and employed some time in

20 the distribution of rewards and punishments at the end of so memorable a war, which restored to the obedience of Rome those provinces that had renounced their allegiance since the captivity of Valerian.

When the Syrian queen was brought into the presence of Aurelian, he sternly asked her, How  
<sup>Behaviour of</sup> she had presumed to rise in arms against  
Zenobia. the emperors of Rome? The answer of  
Zenobia was a prudent mixture of respect and  
30 firmness. "Because I disdained to consider as  
Roman emperors an Aureolus or a Gallienus.  
You alone I acknowledge as my conqueror and

my sovereign." But, as female fortitude is commonly artificial, so it is seldom steady or consistent. The courage of Zenobia deserted her in the hour of trial; she trembled at the angry clamours of the soldiers, who called aloud for her immediate execution, forgot the generous despair of Cleopatra, which she had proposed as her model, and ignominiously purchased life by the sacrifice of her fame and her friends. It was to their counsels, which governed the weakness of her sex, that she <sup>10</sup> imputed the guilt of her obstinate resistance; it was on their heads that she directed the vengeance of the cruel Aurelian. The fame of Longinus, who was included among the numerous and perhaps innocent victims of her fear, will survive that of the queen who betrayed, or the tyrant who condemned, him. Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered soldier, but they had served to elevate and harmonize the soul of Longinus. Without uttering a complaint, he calmly <sup>20</sup> followed the executioner, pitying his unhappy mistress, and bestowing comfort on his afflicted friends.

Returning from the conquest of the East, Aurelian had already crossed the Straits which divide Europe from Asia, when he was provoked by the intelligence that the <sup>Rebellion and  
ruin of  
Palmyra.</sup> Palmyrenians had massacred the governor and garrison which he had left among them, and again erected the standard of revolt. Without a moment's <sup>30</sup> deliberation, he once more turned his face towards Syria. Antioch was alarmed by his rapid approach,

and the helpless city of Palmyra felt the irresistible weight of his resentment. We have a letter of Aurelian himself, in which he acknowledges that old men, women, children, and peasants had been involved in that dreadful execution, which should have been confined to armed rebellion; and, although his principal concern seems directed to the re-establishment of a temple of the Sun, he discovers some pity for the remnant of the Palmyrenians, to whom he grants the permission of rebuilding and inhabiting their city. But it is easier to destroy than to restore. The seat of commerce, of arts, and of Zenobia, gradually sunk into an obscure town, a trifling fortress, and at length a miserable village. The present citizens of Palmyra, consisting of thirty or forty families, have erected their mud cottages within the spacious court of a magnificent temple.

Another and a last labour still awaited the in-  
defatigable Aurelian; to suppress a dangerous  
<sup>Aurelian</sup> though obscure rebel, who during the  
<sup>supresses</sup>  
<sup>the rebellion</sup>  
<sup>of Firmus in</sup>  
<sup>Egypt.</sup> revolt of Palmyra, had arisen on the  
banks of the Nile. Firmus, the friend  
and ally, as he proudly styled himself, of Oden-  
athus and Zenobia, was no more than a wealthy  
merchant of Egypt. In the course of his trade  
to India, he had formed very intimate connexions  
with the Saracens and the Blemmyes, whose situ-  
ation on either coast of the Red Sea gave them  
an easy introduction into the Upper Egypt. The  
Egyptians he inflamed with the hope of freedom,  
and, at the head of their furious multitude, broke

into the city of Alexandria, where he assumed the Imperial purple, coined money, published edicts, and raised an army, which, as he vainly boasted, he was capable of maintaining from the sole profits of his paper trade. Such troops were a feeble defence against the approach of Aurelian; and it seems almost unnecessary to relate that Firmus was routed, taken, tortured, and put to death. Aurelian might now congratulate the senate, the people, and himself, that in little more than three <sup>10</sup> years he had restored universal peace and order to the Roman world.

Since the foundation of Rome, no general had more nobly deserved a triumph than Aurelian; nor was a triumph ever celebrated with <sup>A.D. 274.  
Triumph of  
Aurelian.</sup> superior pride and magnificence. The pomp was opened by twenty elephants, four royal tigers, and above two hundred of the most curious animals from every climate of the North, the East, and the South. They were followed by sixteen <sup>20</sup> hundred gladiators, devoted to the cruel amusement of the amphitheatre. The wealth of Asia, the arms and ensigns of so many conquered nations, and the magnificent plate and wardrobe of the Syrian queen, were disposed in exact symmetry or artful disorder. The ambassadors of the most remote parts of the earth, of Æthiopia, Arabia, Persia, Bactriana, India, and China, all remarkable by their rich or singular dresses, displayed the same and power of the Roman emperor, who <sup>30</sup> exposed likewise to the public view the presents that he had received, and particularly a great

number of crowns of gold, the offerings of grateful cities. The victories of Aurelian were attested by the long train of captives who reluctantly attended his triumph, Goths, Vandals, Sarmatians, Alemanni, Franks, Gauls, Syrians and Egyptians. Each people was distinguished by its peculiar inscription, and the title of Amazons was bestowed on ten martial heroines of the Gothic nation who had been taken in arms. But every eye, disregarding  
10 the crowd of captives, was fixed on the emperor Tetricus and the queen of the East. The former, as well as his son, whom he had created Augustus, was dressed in Gallic trowsers, a saffron tunic, and a robe of purple. The beauteous figure of Zenobia was confined by fetters of gold; a slave supported the gold chain which encircled her neck, and she almost fainted under the intolerable weight of jewels. She preceded on foot the magnificent chariot in which she once hoped to enter the  
20 gates of Rome. It was followed by two other chariots, still more sumptuous, of Odenathus and of the Persian monarch. The triumphal car of Aurelian (it had formerly been used by a Gothic king) was drawn, on this memorable occasion, either by four stags or by four elephants. The most illustrious of the senate, the people, and the army, closed the solemn procession. Unfeigned joy, wonder and gratitude swelled the acclamations of the multitude; but the satisfaction of  
30 the senate was clouded by the appearance of Tetricus; nor could they suppress a rising murmur that the haughty emperor should thus expose to

public ignominy the person of a Roman and a magistrate.

But however, in the treatment of his unfortunate rivals, Aurelian might indulge his pride, His treatment of Tetricus and Zenobia. he behaved towards them with a generous clemency which was seldom exercised by the ancient conquerors. Princes who, without success, had defended their throne or freedom were frequently strangled in prison, as soon as the triumphal pomp ascended the Capitol. These usurpers, whom their defeat had convicted of the crime of treason, were permitted to spend their lives in affluence and honourable repose. The emperor presented Zenobia with an elegant villa at Tibur, or Tivoli, about twenty miles from the capital; the Syrian queen insensibly sank into a Roman matron, her daughters married into noble families, and her race was not yet extinct in the fifth century. Tetricus and his son were reinstated in their rank and fortunes. They erected on the Cælian Hill a magnificent palace, and, as soon as it was finished, invited Aurelian to supper. On his entrance, he was agreeably surprised with a picture which represented their singular history. They were delineated offering to the emperor a civic crown and the sceptre of Gaul, and again receiving at his hands the ornaments of the senatorial dignity. The father was afterwards invested with the government of Lucania, and Aurelian, who soon admitted the abdicated monarch to his friendship and conversation, familiarly asked him, Whether it were not more desirable to administer a province of

Italy, than to reign beyond the Alps? The son long continued a respectable member of the senate; nor was there any one of the Roman nobility more esteemed by Aurelian, as well as by his successors.

So long and so various was the pomp of <sup>His magnifi-  
cece and  
devotion.</sup> Aurelian's triumph that, although it opened with the dawn of day, the slow majesty of the procession ascended not the Capitol before the ninth hour; and it was already dark <sup>to</sup> when the emperor returned to the palace. The festival was protracted by theatrical representations, the games of the circus, the hunting of wild beasts, combats of gladiators, and naval engagements. Liberal donatives were distributed to the army and people, and several institutions, agreeable or beneficial to the city, contributed to perpetuate the glory of Aurelian. A considerable portion of his oriental spoils was consecrated to the gods of Rome; the Capitol, and every other <sup>20</sup> temple, glittered with the offerings of his ostentatious piety; and the temple of the Sun alone received about fifteen thousand pounds of gold. This last was a magnificent structure, erected by the emperor on the side of the Quirinal hill, and dedicated, soon after the triumph, to that deity whom Aurelian adored as the parent of his life and fortunes. His mother had been an inferior priestess in a chapel of the Sun; a peculiar devotion to the god of Light was a sentiment which <sup>30</sup> the fortunate peasant imbibed in his infancy; and every step of his elevation, every victory of his reign, fortified superstition by gratitude.

It was observed by one of the most sagacious of the Roman princes that the talents of his predecessor Aurelian were better suited to the command of an army than to the government of an empire. Conscious of the character in which nature and experience had enabled him to excel, he again took the field a few months after his triumph. It was expedient to exercise the restless temper of the legions in some foreign war, and the Persian monarch, exulting in the shame of Valerian, still braved with impunity the offended majesty of Rome. At the head of an army, less formidable by its numbers than by its discipline and valour, the emperor advanced as far as the Straits which divide Europe from Asia. He there experienced that the most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair. He had threatened one of his secretaries who was accused of extort<sup>ion</sup>; and it was known that he seldom threatened in vain. The last hope which remained for the criminal was to involve some of the principal officers of the army in his danger, or at least in his fears. Artfully counterfeiting his master's hand, he showed them, in a long and bloody list, their own names devoted to death. Without suspecting or examining the fraud, they resolved to secure their lives by the murder of the emperor. On his march, between Byzantium and Heraclea, Aurelian was suddenly attacked by the conspirators, whose stations gave them a right to surround his person; and, after a short resistance, fell by the hand of Mucapor, a general

He marches  
into the East,  
and is assassinated.  
A.D.  
274.

whom he had always loved and trusted. He died  
A.D. 275. regretted by the army, detested by the senate, but universally acknowledged as a warlike and fortunate prince, the useful though severe reformer of a degenerate state.

## II.

### JULIAN'S LAST CAMPAIGN.

THE reign of Constantine (323-337) had been memorable for the transference of the seat of Empire from Rome to Constantinople, and also for the bestowal of imperial patronage upon Christianity. His death was followed by a fierce domestic struggle for the succession. By 350 Constantius was sole emperor; but Julian, who commanded the legions on the Rhine, was declared emperor by his soldiers, and, as Constantius died before the two rivals could meet, Julian succeeded to the possession of Constantinople and the supreme power. He is one of the most striking figures in history. Known as THE APOSTATE because he tried to revive Paganism as the established religion, he has suffered in reputation from Christian writers. On the other hand, Gibbon, who had no love for Christianity, may have been predisposed in his favour. The story of how the legions of Gaul forced the imperial power upon him (ch. xxii.) is a thrilling narrative. Not less fascinating is the history of that campaign against Persia, in which he met his death at the early age of thirty-one.

JULIAN was an object of terror and hatred to the Persians: and the painters of that nation represented the invader of their country under the emblem of a furious lion, who vomited from his mouth a consuming fire. To his friends and soldiers, the philosophic

hero appeared in a more amiable light ; and his virtues were never more conspicuously displayed than in the last, and most active, period of his life. He practised, without effort, and almost without merit, the habitual qualities of temperance and sobriety. In the warm climate of Assyria, which solicited a luxurious people to the gratification of every sensual desire, a youthful conqueror preserved his chastity pure and inviolate. With the same firmness he sustained the hardships of war. When the Romans marched through the flat and flooded country, their sovereign, on foot, at the head of his legions, shared their fatigues, and animated their diligence. In every useful labour, the hand of Julian was prompt and strenuous ; and the Imperial purple was wet and dirty, as the coarse garment of the meanest soldier. The two sieges allowed him some remarkable opportunities of signalizing his personal valour, which, in the improved state of the military art, can seldom be exerted by a prudent general. The emperor stood before the citadel of Perisabor, insensible of his extreme danger, and encouraged his troops to burst open the gates of iron, till he was almost overwhelmed under a cloud of missile weapons and huge stones that were directed against his person. As he examined the exterior fortifications of Maogamalcha, two Persians, devoting themselves for their country, suddenly rushed upon him with drawn scimitars : the emperor dexterously received their blows on his uplifted shield ; and, with a steady and well-aimed thrust, laid one of his

adversaries dead at his feet. The esteem of a prince who possesses the virtues which he approves is the noblest recompense of a deserving subject ; and the authority which Julian derived from his personal merit enabled him to revive and enforce the rigour of ancient discipline. He punished with death, or ignominy, the misbehaviour of three troops of horse, who, in a skirmish with the Surenas, had lost their honour, and one of their standards : and he distinguished with *obsidional* <sup>10</sup> crowns the valour of the foremost soldiers who had ascended into the city of Maogamalcha. After the siege of Perisabor, the firmness of the emperor was exercised by the insolent avarice of the army, who loudly complained that their services were rewarded by a trifling donative of one hundred pieces of silver. His just indignation was expressed in the grave and manly language of a Roman. "Riches are the object of your desires ? those riches are in the hands of the <sup>20</sup> Persians ; and the spoils of this fruitful country are proposed as the prize of your valour and discipline. Believe me," added Julian, "the Roman republic, which formerly possessed such immense treasures, is now reduced to want and wretchedness ; since our princes have been persuaded, by weak and interested ministers, to purchase with gold the tranquillity of the Barbarians. The revenue is exhausted ; the cities are ruined ; the provinces are dispeopled. For myself, <sup>30</sup> the only inheritance that I have received from my royal ancestors is a soul incapable of fear ; and, as

long as I am convinced that every real advantage  
is seated in the mind, I shall not blush to acknow-  
ledge an honourable poverty, which, in the days of  
ancient virtue, was considered as the glory of Fabri-  
cius. That glory, and that virtue, may be your own,  
if you will listen to the voice of Heaven, and of your  
leader. But, if you will rashly persist, if you are  
determined to renew the shameful and mischievous  
examples of old seditions, proceed.—As it becomes  
10 an emperor who has filled the first rank among  
men, I am prepared to die, standing; and to  
despise a precarious life, which, every hour, may  
depend on an accidental fever. If I have been  
found unworthy of the command, there are now  
among you (I speak it with pride and pleasure),  
there are many chiefs, whose merit and experience  
are equal to the conduct of the most important war.  
Such has been the temper of my reign that  
I can retire, without regret, and without appre-  
hension, to the obscurity of a private station." The  
modest resolution of Julian was answered by the  
unanimous applause and cheerful obedience of  
the Romans; who declared their confidence of vic-  
tory, while they fought under the banners of their  
heroic prince. Their courage was kindled by his  
frequent and familiar asseverations (for such wishes  
were the oaths of Julian), "So may I reduce the  
Persians under the yoke!" "Thus may I restore  
the strength and splendour of the republic!" The  
30 love of fame was the ardent passion of his soul:  
but it was not before he trampled on the ruins of  
Maogamalcha, that he allowed himself to say,

"We have now provided some materials for the sophist of Antioch."

The successful valour of Julian had triumphed over all the obstacles that opposed his march to the gates of Ctesiphon. But the reduction, or even the siege, of the capital of Persia was still at a distance : nor can the military conduct of the emperor be clearly apprehended without a knowledge of the country which was the theatre of his bold and skilful operations. Twenty miles to the south of Bagdad, and on the eastern bank of the Tigris, the curiosity of travellers has observed some ruins of the palaces of Ctesiphon, which, in the time of Julian, was a great and populous city. The name and glory of the adjacent Seleucia were for ever extinguished ; and the only remaining quarter of that Greek colony had resumed, with the Assyrian language and manners, the primitive appellation of Coche. Coche was situate on the western side of the Tigris ; but it was naturally considered as a suburb of Ctesiphon, with which we may suppose it to have been connected by a permanent bridge of boats. The united parts contributed to form the common epithet of Al Modain, THE CITIES, which the Orientals have bestowed on the winter residence of the Sassanides ; and the whole circumference of the Persian capital was strongly fortified by the waters of the river, by lofty walls, and by impracticable morasses. Near the ruins of Seleucia, the camp of Julian was fixed ; and secured, by a ditch and rampart, against the sallies

He transports  
his fleet from  
the Euphrates  
to the Tigris.

of the numerous and enterprising garrison of Coche. In this fruitful and pleasant country, the Romans were plentifully supplied with water and forage; and several forts which might have embarrassed the motions of the army submitted, after some resistance, to the efforts of their valour. The fleet passed from the Euphrates into an artificial derivation of that river, which pours a copious and navigable stream into the Tigris, at a small distance *below* the great city. If they had followed this royal canal, which bore the name of Nahar-Malcha, the intermediate situation of Coche would have separated the fleet and army of Julian; and the rash attempt of steering against the current of the Tigris, and forcing their way through the midst of a hostile capital, must have been attended with the total destruction of the Roman navy. The prudence of the emperor foresaw the danger, and provided the remedy. As he had minutely studied the operations of Trajan in the same country, he soon recollect ed that his warlike predecessor had dug a new and navigable canal, which, leaving Coche on the right hand, conveyed the waters of the Nahar-Malcha into the river Tigris, at some distance *above* the cities. From the information of the peasants, Julian ascertained the vestiges of this ancient work, which were almost obliterated by design or accident. By the indefatigable labour of the soldiers, a broad and deep channel was speedily prepared for the reception of the Euphrates. A strong dyke was constructed to interrupt the ordinary current of the

Nahar-Malcha : a flood of waters rushed impetuously into their new bed ; and the Roman fleet, steering their triumphant course into the Tigris, derided the vain and ineffectual barriers which the Persians of Ctesiphon had erected to oppose their passage.

As it became necessary to transport the Roman army over the Tigris, another labour presented itself, of less toil, but of more danger, than the preceding expedition. Passage of the Tigris and victory of the Romans. <sup>10</sup> The stream was broad and rapid ; the ascent steep and difficult ; and the intrenchments, which had been formed on the ridge of the opposite bank, were lined with a numerous army of heavy cuirassiers, dexterous archers, and huge elephants ; who (according to the extravagant hyperbole of Libanius) could trample, with the same ease, a field of corn, or a legion of Romans. In the presence of such an enemy, the construction of a bridge was impracticable ; and the intrepid prince, <sup>20</sup> who instantly seized the only possible expedient, concealed his design, till the moment of execution, from the knowledge of the Barbarians, of his own troops, and even of his generals themselves. Under the specious pretence of examining the state of the magazines, four-score vessels were gradually unladen ; and a select detachment, apparently destined for some secret expedition, was ordered to stand to their arms on the first signal. Julian disguised the silent anxiety of <sup>30</sup> his own mind with smiles of confidence and joy ; and amused the hostile nations with the spectacle

of military games, which he insultingly celebrated under the walls of Coche. The day was consecrated to pleasure; but, as soon as the hour of supper was past, the emperor summoned the generals to his tent; and acquainted them that he had fixed that night for the passage of the Tigris. They stood in silent and respectful astonishment; but, when the venerable Sallust assumed the privilege of his age and experience,  
10 the rest of the chiefs supported with freedom the weight of his prudent remonstrances. Julian contented himself with observing that conquest and safety depended on the attempt; that, instead of diminishing, the number of their enemies would be increased, by successive reinforcements; and that a longer delay would neither contract the breadth of the stream nor level the height of the bank. The signal was instantly given, and obeyed: the most impatient of the legionaries  
20 leaped into five vessels that lay nearest to the bank; and, as they plied their oars with intrepid diligence, they were lost, after a few moments, in the darkness of the night. A flame arose on the opposite side; and Julian, who too clearly understood that his foremost vessels, in attempting to land, had been fired by the enemy, dexterously converted their extreme danger into a presage of victory. "Our fellow-soldiers," he eagerly exclaimed, "are already masters of the bank; see  
30—they make the appointed signal: let us hasten to emulate and assist their courage." The united and rapid motion of a great fleet broke the violence

of the current, and they reached the eastern shore of the Tigris with sufficient speed to extinguish the flames and rescue their adventurous companions. The difficulties of a steep and lofty ascent were increased by the weight of armour and the darkness of the night. A shower of stones, darts, and fire was incessantly discharged on the heads of the assailants; who, after an arduous struggle, climbed the bank, and stood victorious upon the ramparts. As soon as they <sup>10</sup> possessed a more equal field, Julian, who, with his light infantry, had led the attack, darted through the ranks a skilful and experienced eye: his bravest soldiers, according to the precepts of Homer, were distributed in the front and rear; and all the trumpets of the imperial army sounded to battle. The Romans, after sending up a military shout, advanced in measured steps to the animating notes of martial music; launched their formidable javelins; and rushed forwards with <sup>20</sup> drawn swords, to deprive the Barbarians, by a closer onset, of the advantage of their missile weapons. The whole engagement lasted above twelve hours; till the gradual retreat of the Persians was changed into a disorderly flight, of which the shameful example was given by the principal leaders, and the Surenas himself. They were pursued to the gates of Ctesiphon; and the conquerors might have entered the dismayed city, if their general, Victor, who was dangerously <sup>30</sup> wounded with an arrow, had not conjured them to desist from a rash attempt, which must be fatal,

if it were not successful. On *their* side, the Romans acknowledged the loss of only seventy-five men; while they affirmed that the Barbarians had left on the field of battle two thousand five hundred, or even six thousand, of their bravest soldiers. The spoil was such as might be expected from the riches and luxury of an Oriental camp; large quantities of silver and gold, splendid arms and trappings, and beds and tables of massive silver.<sup>10</sup> The victorious emperor distributed, as the rewards of valour, some honourable gifts, civic and mural and naval crowns; which he, and perhaps he alone, esteemed more precious than the wealth of Asia. A solemn sacrifice was offered to the god of war, but the appearances of the victims threatened the most inauspicious events; and Julian soon discovered, by less ambiguous signs, that he had now reached the term of his prosperity.

On the second day after the battle, the domestic guards, the Jovians and Herculians, and the remaining troops, which composed near two-thirds of the whole army, were securely wasted over the Tigris. While the Persians beheld from the walls of Ctesiphon the desolation of the adjacent country, Julian cast many an anxious look towards the North, in full expectation that, as he himself had victoriously penetrated to the capital of Sapor, the march and junction of his lieutenants, Sebastian and Procopius, would be executed with the same courage and diligence. His expectations were disappointed

Situation and  
obstinacy of  
Julian. A.D.  
169, June.

. by the treachery of the Armenian king, who permitted, and most probably directed, the desertion of his auxiliary troops from the camp of the Romans; and by the dissensions of the two generals, who were incapable of forming or executing any plan for the public service. When the emperor had relinquished the hope of this important reinforcement, he condescended to hold a council of war, and approved, after a full debate, the sentiment of those generals who dissuaded the 10 siege of Ctesiphon as a fruitless and pernicious undertaking. It is not easy for us to conceive by what arts of fortification a city thrice besieged and taken by the predecessors of Julian could be rendered impregnable against an army of sixty thousand Romans, commanded by a brave and experienced general, and abundantly supplied with ships, provisions, battering engines, and military stores. But we may rest assured, from the love of glory, and contempt of danger, which formed 20 the character of Julian, that he was not disengaged by any trivial or imaginary obstacles. At the very time when he declined the siege of Ctesiphon, he rejected, with obstinacy and disdain, the most flattering offers of a negotiation of peace. Sapor, who had been so long accustomed to the tardy ostentation of Constantius, was surprised by the intrepid diligence of his successor. As far as the confines of India and Scythia, the satraps of the distant provinces were ordered to assemble 30 their troops, and to march, without delay, to the assistance of their monarch. But their

preparations were dilatory, their motions slow; and, before Sapor could lead an army into the field, he received the melancholy intelligence of the devastation of Assyria, the ruin of his palaces, and the slaughter of his bravest troops, who defended the passage of the Tigris. The pride of royalty was humbled in the dust; he took his repasts on the ground; and the disorder of his hair expressed the grief and anxiety of his mind.

¶ Perhaps he would not have refused to purchase, with one half of his kingdom, the safety of the remainder: and he would have gladly subscribed himself, in a treaty of peace, the faithful and dependent ally of the Roman conqueror. Under the pretence of private business, a minister of rank and confidence was secretly dispatched to embrace the knees of Hormisdas, and to request, in the language of a suppliant, that he might be introduced into the presence of the emperor.

¶ Sassanian prince, whether he listened to the voice of pride or humanity, whether he consulted the sentiments of his birth or the duties of his situation, was equally inclined to promote a salutary measure, which would terminate the calamities of Persia, and secure the triumph of Rome. He was astonished by the inflexible firmness of a hero, who remembered, most unfortunately for himself and for his country, that Alexander had uniformly rejected the propositions of Darius. But, as

¶ Julian was sensible that the hope of a safe and honourable peace might cool the ardour of his troops, he earnestly requested that Hormisdas

would privately dismiss the minister of Sapor and conceal this dangerous temptation from the knowledge of the camp.

The honour, as well as interest, of Julian forbade him to consume his time under the impregnable walls of Ctesiphon ; and, as often as he defied the Barbarians, who defended the city, to meet him on the open plain, they prudently replied that, if he desired to exercise his valour, he might seek the army of the Great King. He felt the insult, and he accepted the advice. Instead of confining his servile march to the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris, he resolved to imitate the adventurous spirit of Alexander, and boldly to advance into the inland provinces, till he forced his rival to contend with him, perhaps in the plains of Arbela, for the empire of Asia. The magnanimity of Julian was applauded and betrayed by the arts of a noble Persian, who, in the cause of his country, had generously submitted to act a part full of danger, of falsehood, and of shame. With a train of faithful followers, he deserted to the Imperial camp ; exposed, in a specious tale, the injuries which he had sustained ; exaggerated the cruelty of Sapor, the discontent of the people, and the weakness of the monarchy ; and confidently offered himself as the hostage and guide of the Roman march. The most rational grounds of suspicion were urged, without effect, by the wisdom and experience of Hormisdas ; and the credulous Julian, receiving the traitor into his bosom, was

persuaded to issue an hasty order, which, in the opinion of mankind, appeared to arraign his prudence, and to endanger his safety. He destroyed, in a single hour, the whole navy, which had been transported above five hundred miles, at so great expense of toil, of treasure, and of blood. Twelve, or, at the most, twenty-two, small vessels were saved, to accompany, on carriages, the march of the army, and to form occasional bridges for the passage of the rivers. A supply of twenty days' provisions was reserved for the use of the soldiers; and the rest of the magazines, with a fleet of eleven hundred vessels, which rode at anchor in the Tigris, were abandoned to the flames, by the absolute command of the emperor. The Christian bishops, Gregory and Augustin, insult the madness of the apostate, who executed, with his own hands, the sentence of divine justice. Their authority, of less weight, perhaps, in a military question, is confirmed by the cool judgment of an experienced soldier, who was himself spectator of the conflagration, and who could not disapprove the reluctant murmurs of the troops. Yet there are not wanting some specious and perhaps solid reasons, which might justify the resolution of Julian. The navigation of the Euphrates never ascended above Babylon, nor that of the Tigris above Opis. The distance of the last-mentioned city from the Roman camp was not very considerable; and Julian must soon have renounced the vain and impracticable attempt of forcing upwards a great fleet against the stream

of a rapid river, which in several places was embarrassed by natural or artificial cataracts. The power of sails or oars was insufficient ; it became necessary to tow the ships against the current of the river ; the strength of twenty thousand soldiers was exhausted in this tedious and servile labour ; and, if the Romans continued to march along the bank of the Tigris, they could only expect to return home without achieving any enterprise worthy of the genius or fortune of their leader. If, on 10 the contrary, it was advisable to advance into the inland country, the destruction of the fleet and magazines was the only measure which could save that valuable prize from the hands of the numerous and active troops which might suddenly be poured from the gates of Ctesiphon. Had the arms of Julian been victorious, we should now admire the conduct, as well as the courage, of a hero, who, by depriving his soldiers of the hopes of a retreat, left them only the alternative of death or conquest.<sup>20</sup>

The cumbersome train of artillery and waggons which retards the operations of a modern army was in a great measure unknown in the camps of the Romans. Yet, in every age, the subsistence of sixty thousand men must have been one of the most important cares of a prudent general ; and that subsistence could only be drawn from his own or from the enemy's country. Had it been possible for Julian to maintain a bridge of communication on the Tigris, and to preserve<sup>and marches  
against Sapor.</sup> 30 the conquered places of Assyria, a desolated province could not afford any large or regular supplies,

in a season of the year when the lands were covered by the inundation of the Euphrates, and the unwholesome air was darkened with swarms of innumerable insects. The appearance of the hostile country was far more inviting. The extensive region that lies between the river Tigris and the mountains of Media was filled with villages and towns; and the fertile soil, for the most part, was in a very improved state of cultivation. Julian <sup>10</sup> might expect that a conqueror who possessed the two forcible instruments of persuasion, steel and gold, would easily procure a plentiful subsistence from the fears or the avarice of the natives. But on the approach of the Romans, this rich and smiling prospect was instantly blasted. Wherever they moved, the inhabitants deserted the open villages, and took shelter in the fortified towns; the cattle was driven away; the grass and ripe corn were consumed with fire; and, as soon as the <sup>20</sup> flames had subsided which interrupted the march of Julian, he beheld the melancholy face of a smoking and naked desert. This desperate but effectual method of defence can only be executed by the enthusiasm of a people who prefer their independence to their property; or by the rigour of an arbitrary government, which consults the public safety without submitting to their inclinations the liberty of choice. On the present occasion, the zeal and obedience of the Persians seconded <sup>30</sup> the commands of Sapor; and the emperor was soon reduced to the scanty stock of provisions, which continually wasted in his hands. Before

they were entirely consumed, he might still have reached the wealthy and unwarlike cities of Ecbatana or Susa, by the effort of a well-directed march; but he was deprived of this last resource by his ignorance of the roads, and by the perfidy of his guides. The Romans wandered several days in the country to the eastward of Bagdad: the Persian deserter, who had artfully led them into the snare, escaped from their resentment; and his followers, as soon as they were put to the torture, confessed the secret of the conspiracy. The visionary conquests of Hyrcania and India, which had so long amused, now tormented, the mind of Julian. Conscious that his own imprudence was the cause of the public distress, he anxiously balanced the hopes of safety or success, without obtaining a satisfactory answer either from gods or men. At length, as the only practicable measure, he embraced the resolution of directing his steps towards the banks of the Tigris, with the design of saving the army by a hasty march to the confines of Corduene; a fertile and friendly province, which acknowledged the sovereignty of Rome. The desponding troops obeyed the signal of the retreat, only <sup>June 26.</sup> seventy days after they had passed the Chaboras with the sanguine expectation of subverting the throne of Persia.

As long as the Romans seemed to advance into the country, their march was observed and insulted from a distance by several bodies of Persian cavalry; who, showing themselves sometimes in

loose, and sometimes in closer, order, faintly skirmished with the advanced guards. These detachments, were, however, supported by a much greater force; and the heads of the columns were no sooner pointed towards the Tigris than a cloud of dust arose on the plain. The Romans, who now aspired only to the permission of a safe and speedy retreat, endeavoured to persuade themselves that this formidable appearance was occasioned by a troop of wild asses, or perhaps by the approach of some friendly Arabs. They halted, pitched their tents, fortified their camp, passed the whole night in continual alarms; and discovered, at the dawn of day, that they were surrounded by an army of Persians. This army, which might be considered only as the van of the Barbarians, was soon followed by the main body of cuirassiers, archers, and elephants, commanded by Meranes, a general of rank and reputation. He was accompanied by two of the king's sons, and many of the principal satraps; and fame and expectation exaggerated the strength of the remaining powers, which slowly advanced under the conduct of Sapor himself. As the Romans continued their march, their long array, which was forced to bend, or divide, according to the varieties of the ground, afforded frequent and favourable opportunities to their vigilant enemies. The Persians repeatedly charged with fury; they were repeatedly repulsed with firmness; and the action at Maronga, which almost deserved the name of a battle, was marked by a

Retreat and  
distress of  
the Roman  
army.

considerable loss of satraps and elephants, perhaps of equal value in the eyes of their monarch. These splendid advantages were not obtained without an adequate slaughter on the side of the Romans : several officers of distinction were either killed or wounded ; and the emperor himself, who, on all occasions of danger, inspired and guided the valour of his troops, was obliged to expose his person and exert his abilities. The weight of offensive and defensive arms, which still constituted the strength <sup>10</sup> and safety of the Romans, disabled them from making any long or effectual pursuit ; and, as the horsemen of the East were trained to dart their javelins, and shoot their arrows, at full speed, and in every possible direction, the cavalry of Persia was never more formidable than in the moment of a rapid and disorderly flight. But the most certain and irreparable loss of the Romans was that of time. The hardy veterans, accustomed to the cold climate of Gaul and Germany, fainted <sup>20</sup> under the sultry heat of an Assyrian summer : their vigour was exhausted by the incessant repetition of march and combat ; and the progress of the army was suspended by the precautions of a slow and dangerous retreat in the presence of an active enemy. Every day, every hour, as the supply diminished, the value and price of subsistence increased in the Roman camp. Julian, who always contented himself with such food as a hungry soldier would have disdained, distributed <sup>30</sup> for the use of his troops the provisions of the imperial household, and whatever could be spared

from the sumpter-horses of the tribunes and generals. But this feeble relief served only to aggravate the sense of the public distress ; and the Romans began to entertain the most gloomy apprehensions that, before they could reach the frontiers of the empire, they should all perish, either by famine or by the sword of the Barbarians.

While Julian struggled with the almost insuperable difficulties of his situation, the silent hours of Julian mentally wounded. the night were still devoted to study and contemplation. Whenever he closed his eyes in short and interrupted slumbers, his mind was agitated with painful anxiety ; nor can it be thought surprising that the Genius of the empire should once more appear before him, covering with a funeral veil his head and his horn of abundance, and slowly retiring from the Imperial tent. The monarch started from his couch, and stepping forth, to refresh his wearied spirits with the coolness of the midnight air, he beheld a fiery meteor, which shot athwart the sky, and suddenly vanished. Julian was convinced that he had seen the menacing countenance of the god of war ; the council which he summoned, of Tuscan haruspices, unanimously pronounced that he should abstain from action : but, on this occasion, necessity and reason were more prevalent than superstition ; and the trumpets sounded at the break of day. The army marched through a hilly country ; and the hills had been secretly occupied by the Persians. Julian led the van, with the skill and attention of

a consummate general ; he was alarmed by the intelligence that his rear was suddenly attacked. The heat of the weather had tempted him to lay aside his cuirass ; but he snatched a shield from one of his attendants, and hastened, with a sufficient reinforcement, to the relief of the rear-guard. A similar danger recalled the intrepid prince to the defence of the front ; and, as he galloped between the columns, the centre of the left was attacked, and almost overpowered, by a furious <sup>10</sup> charge of the Persian cavalry and elephants. This huge body was soon defeated, by the well-timed evolution of the light infantry, who aimed their weapons, with dexterity and effect, against the backs of the horsemen and the legs of the elephants. The Barbarians fled ; and Julian, who was foremost in every danger, animated the pursuit with his voice and gestures. His trembling guards, scattered and oppressed by the disorderly throng of friends and enemies, reminded their <sup>20</sup> fearless sovereign that he was without armour ; and conjured him to decline the fall of the impending ruin. As they exclaimed, a cloud of darts and arrows was discharged from the flying squadrons ; and a javelin, after razing the skin of his arm, transpierced the ribs, and fixed in the inferior part of the liver. Julian attempted to draw the deadly weapon from his side ; but his fingers were cut by the sharpness of the steel, and he fell senseless from his horse. His guards flew <sup>30</sup> to his relief ; and the wounded emperor was gently raised from the ground, and conveyed out of the

tumult of the battle into an adjacent tent. The report of the melancholy event passed from rank to rank; but the grief of the Romans inspired them with invincible valour and the desire of revenge. The bloody and obstinate conflict was maintained by the two armies, till they were separated by the total darkness of the night. The Persians derived some honour from the advantage which they obtained against the left wing, where  
10 Anatolius, master of the offices, was slain, and the prefect Sallust very narrowly escaped. But the event of the day was adverse to the Barbarians. They abandoned the field, their two generals, Meranes and Nohordates, fifty nobles or satraps, and a multitude of their bravest soldiers: and the success of the Romans, if Julian had survived, might have been improved into a decisive and useful victory.

The first words that Julian uttered, after his recovery from the fainting fit into which he had  
20 been thrown by loss of blood, were expressive of his martial spirit. He called  
The death of Julian. A.D.  
363, June 5. for his horse and arms, and was impatient to rush into the battle. His remaining strength was exhausted by the painful effort; and the surgeons who examined his wound discovered the symptoms of approaching death. He employed the awful moments with the firm temper of a hero and a sage; the philosophers who had accompanied him  
30 in this fatal expedition compared the tent of Julian with the prison of Socrates; and the spectators, whom duty, or friendship, or curiosity, had

assembled around his couch, listened with respectful grief to the funeral oration of their dying emperor. "Friends and fellow-soldiers, the seasonable period of my departure is now arrived, and I discharge, with the cheerfulness of a ready debtor, the demands of nature. I have learned from philosophy, how much the soul is more excellent than the body; and that the separation of the nobler substance should be the subject of joy, rather than of affliction. I have learned from religion, that an early death has often been the reward of piety; and I accept, as a favour of the gods, the mortal stroke that secures me from the danger of disgracing a character, which has hitherto been supported by virtue and fortitude. I die without remorse, as I have lived without guilt. I am pleased to reflect on the innocence of my private life; and I can affirm, with confidence, that the supreme authority, that emanation of the Divine Power, has been preserved in my hands ~~so~~ pure and immaculate. Detesting the corrupt and destructive maxims of despotism, I have considered the happiness of the people as the end of government. Submitting my actions to the laws of prudence, of justice, and of moderation, I have trusted the event to the care of Providence. Peace was the object of my counsels, as long as peace was consistent with the public welfare; but, when the imperious voice of my country summoned me to arms, I exposed my person to the dangers of war, with the clear foreknowledge (which I had acquired from the art of divination) that I was

destined to fall by the sword. I now offer my tribute of gratitude to the Eternal Being, who has not suffered me to perish by the cruelty of a tyrant, by the secret dagger of conspiracy, or by the slow tortures of lingering disease. He has given me, in the midst of an honourable career, a splendid and glorious departure from this world ; and I hold it equally absurd, equally base, to solicit, or to decline, the stroke of fate.—Thus much have I attempted to say ; but my strength fails me, and I feel the approach of death.—I shall cautiously refrain from any word that may tend to influence your suffrages in the election of an emperor. My choice might be imprudent, or injudicious ; and, if it should not be ratified by the consent of the army, it might be fatal to the person whom I should recommend. I shall only, as a good citizen, express my hopes that the Romans may be blessed with the government of a  
20 virtuous sovereign." After this discourse, which Julian pronounced in a firm and gentle tone of voice, he distributed, by a military testament, the remains of his private fortune ; and, making some inquiry why Anatolius was not present, he understood, from the answer of Sallust, that Anatolius was killed ; and bewailed, with amiable inconsistency, the loss of his friend. At the same time he reproved the immoderate grief of the spectators ; and conjured them not to disgrace, by unmanly  
30 tears, the fate of a prince who in a few moments would be united with heaven, and with the stars. The spectators were silent ; and Julian entered

into a metaphysical argument with the philosophers Priscus and Maximus, on the nature of the soul. The efforts which he made, of mind as well as body, most probably hastened his death. His wound began to bleed with fresh violence ; his respiration was embarrassed by the swelling of the veins : he called for a draught of cold water, and, as soon as he had drunk it, expired without pain, about the hour of midnight. Such was the end of that extraordinary man, in the thirty-second year of his age, after a reign of one year and about eight months from the death of Constantius. In his last moments he displayed, perhaps with some ostentation, the love of virtue and of fame which had been the ruling passions of his life.

### III.

## ROME AND ALARIC.

DURING the fourth century the Goths had made themselves into a great state, covering much of what is now Eastern Germany and Western Russia. They had embraced Christianity ; they were partially civilized ; and they were not unfriendly on the whole to Rome. The pressure of the Huns, who were nomads and barbarians, drove the Goths across the Roman frontiers ; and in 378, when they were attacked by the emperor Valens, they defeated him at the battle of Hadrianople.

10 In 395 Alaric became king of the Visigoths or Western Goths, and in the same year the death of the emperor Theodosius led to the final division of the empire into two. His sons divided the power, Arcadius reigning in Constantinople, Honorius in Italy.

Rome was no longer the seat even of western empire, for Honorius withdrew his court to the more defensible Ravenna. But it was still, with its population of over a million, the greatest city in the world, and the city with the greatest prestige ; and Gibbon's description of its state at the time, 20 and the luxury of its degenerate nobles and commons, prepares us to understand the consternation produced by the news that the Goth was at its gates.

Alaric invaded Italy many times. The siege described in this chapter was in 408. Two years later, in 410, Alaric actually took Rome.

THE modesty of Alaric was interpreted, by the ministers of Ravenna, as a sure evidence of his weakness and fear. They disdained either to negotiate a treaty or to assemble <sup>Alaric marches to Rome.</sup> an army; and with a rash confidence, derived only from their ignorance of the extreme danger, irretrievably wasted the decisive moments of peace and war. While they expected, in sullen silence, that the Barbarians should evacuate the confines of Italy, Alaric, with bold and rapid marches, <sup>10</sup> passed the Alps and the Po ; hastily pillaged the cities of Aquileia, Altinum, Concordia, and Cremona, which yielded to his arms ; increased his forces by the accession of thirty thousand auxiliaries ; and without meeting a single enemy in the field, advanced as far as the edge of the morass which protected the impregnable residence of the emperor of the West. Instead of attempting the hopeless siege of Ravenna, the prudent leader of the Goths proceeded to Rimini, stretched his <sup>20</sup> ravages along the sea-coast of the Adriatic, and meditated the conquest of the ancient mistress of the world. An Italian hermit, whose zeal and sanctity were respected by the Barbarians themselves, encountered the victorious monarch, and boldly denounced the indignation of heaven against the oppressors of the earth ; but the saint himself was confounded by the solemn asseveration of Alaric that he felt a secret and *præternatural* impulse, which directed, and even compelled, his <sup>30</sup> march to the gates of Rome. He felt that his genius and his fortune were equal to the most

arduous enterprises ; and the enthusiasm which he communicated to the Goths insensibly removed the popular, and almost superstitious, reverence of the nations for the majesty of the Roman name. His troops, animated by the hopes of spoil, followed the course of the Flaminian way, occupied the unguarded passes of the Apennine, descended into the rich plains of Umbria ; and, as they lay encamped on the banks of the Clitumnus, might wantonly slaughter and devour the milk-white oxen, which had been so long reserved for the use of Roman triumphs. A lofty situation and a seasonable tempest of thunder and lightning preserved the little city of Narni ; but the king of the Goths, despising the ignoble prey, still advanced with unabated vigour ; and, after he had passed through the stately arches, adorned with the spoils of Barbaric victories, he pitched his camp under the walls of Rome.

During a period of six hundred and nineteen years, the seat of empire had never been violated

Hannibal at the gates of Rome. by the presence of a foreign enemy.

The unsuccessful expedition of Hannibal served only to display the character of the senate and people ; of a senate degraded, rather than ennobled, by the comparison of an assembly of kings ; and of a people to whom the ambassador of Pyrrhus ascribed the inexhaustible resources of the Hydra. Each of the senators, in the time of the Punic war, had accomplished his term of military service, either in a subordinate or a superior station ; and the decree which invested with temporary

command all those who had been consuls or censors or dictators gave the republic the immediate assistance of many brave and experienced generals. In the beginning of the war, the Roman people consisted of two hundred and fifty thousand citizens of an age to bear arms. Fifty thousand had already died in the defence of their country ; and the twenty-three legions which were employed in the different camps of Italy, Greece, Sardinia, Sicily, and Spain, required about one hundred thousand men. But there still remained an equal number in Rome, and the adjacent territory, who were animated by the same intrepid courage; and every citizen was trained, from his earliest youth, in the discipline and exercises of a soldier. Hannibal was astonished by the constancy of the senate, who, without raising the siege of Capua or recalling their scattered forces, expected his approach. He encamped on the banks of the Anio, at the distance of three miles from the city ; and he was soon informed that the ground on which he had pitched his tent was sold for an adequate price at a public auction and that a body of troops was dismissed by an opposite road, to reinforce the legions of Spain. He led his Africans to the gates of Rome, where he found three armies in order of battle, prepared to receive him ; but Hannibal dreaded the event of a combat from which he could not hope to escape, unless he destroyed the last of his enemies ; and his speedy retreat confessed the invincible courage of the Romans.

From the time of the Punic war the uninter-

rupted succession of senators had preserved the <sup>The Anician</sup> name and image of the republic; and <sup>family.</sup> the degenerate subjects of Honorius ambitiously derived their descent from the heroes who had repulsed the arms of Hannibal and subdued the nations of the earth.

In the time of Jerom and Claudian, the senators unanimously yielded the pre-eminence to the Anician line. The Anician family excelled in <sup>10</sup> faith and in riches; they were the first of the Roman senate who embraced Christianity; and it is probable that Anicius Julian, who was afterwards consul and prefect of the city, atoned for his attachment to the party of Maxentius by the readiness with which he accepted the religion of Constantine. Their ample patrimony was increased by the industry of Probus, the chief of the Anician family; who shared with Gratian the honours of the consulship, and exercised four times the high <sup>20</sup> office of Praetorian prefect. His immense estates were scattered over the wide extent of the Roman world; and, though the public might suspect or disapprove the methods by which they had been acquired, the generosity and magnificence of that fortunate statesman deserved the gratitude of his clients and the admiration of strangers. Such was the respect entertained for his memory that the two sons of Probus in their earliest youth, and at the request of the senate, were associated in the <sup>30</sup> consular dignity: a memorable distinction without example in the annals of Rome.

"The marbles of the Anician palace" was used

as a proverbial expression of opulence and splendour ; but the nobles and senators of Rome aspired in due gradation to imitate that illustrious family. The accurate description of the city, which was composed in the Theodosian age, enumerates one thousand seven hundred and eighty *houses*, the residence of wealthy and honourable citizens. Many of these stately mansions might almost excuse the exaggeration of the poet : that Rome contained a <sup>10</sup> multitude of palaces, and that each palace was equal to a city ; since it included within its own precincts everything which could be subservient either to use or luxury : markets, hippodromes, temples, fountains, baths, porticos, shady groves, and artificial aviaries. The historian Olympiodorus, who represents the state of Rome when it was besieged by the Goths, continues to observe that several of the richest senators received from their estates an annual income of four thousand <sup>20</sup> pounds of gold, above one hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling ; without computing the stated provision of corn and wine, which, had they been sold, might have equalled in value one-third of the money. Compared to this immoderate wealth, an ordinary revenue of a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds of gold might be considered as no more than adequate to the dignity of the senatorian rank, which required many expenses of a public and ostentatious kind. Several examples <sup>30</sup> are recorded in the age of Honorius, of vain and popular nobles who celebrated the year of their

Wealth of the  
Roman nobles.

prætorship by a festival, which lasted seven days and cost above one hundred thousand pounds sterling. The estates of the Roman senators, which so far exceeded the proportion of modern wealth, were not confined to the limits of Italy. Their possessions extended far beyond the Ionian and Ægean seas to the most distant provinces; the city of Nicopolis, which Augustus had founded as an eternal monument of the Actian victory,  
10 was the property of the devout Paula; and it is observed by Seneca that the rivers which had divided hostile nations now flowed through the lands of private citizens.

The opulent nobles of an immense capital, who were never excited by the pursuit of military  
Their manners glory, and seldom engaged in the occupations of civil government, naturally resigned their leisure to the business and amusements of private life. At Rome, commerce was always held in contempt; but the senators, from the first age of the republic, increased their patrimony, and multiplied their clients, by the lucrative practice of usury; and the obsolete laws were eluded, or violated, by the mutual inclinations and interest of both parties. A considerable mass of treasure must always have existed at Rome, either in the current coin of the empire or in the form of gold and silver plate; and there were many sideboards, in the time of Pliny, which contained more solid silver than had  
20 been transported by Scipio from vanquished Carthage. The greater part of the nobles, who dissipated their fortunes in profuse luxury, found

themselves poor in the midst of wealth, and idle in a constant round of dissipation. Their desires were continually gratified by the labour of a thousand hands ; of the numerous train of their domestic slaves, who were actuated by the fear of punishment ; and of the various professions of artificers and merchants, who were more powerfully impelled by the hopes of gain. The ancients were destitute of many of the conveniences of life which have been invented or improved by the progress of industry ; and the plenty of glass and linen has diffused more real comforts among the modern nations of Europe than the senators of Rome could derive from all the refinements of pompous or sensual luxury. Their luxury and their manners have been the subject of minute and laborious disquisition ; but, as such inquiries would divert me too long from the design of the present work, I shall produce an authentic state of Rome and its inhabitants, which is more peculiarly applicable to the period of the Gothic invasion. Ammianus Marcellinus, who prudently chose the capital of the empire as the residence the best adapted to the historian of his own times, has mixed with the narrative of public events a lively representation of the scenes with which he was familiarly conversant. The judicious reader will not always approve the asperity of censure, the choice of circumstances, or the style of expression ; he will perhaps detect the latent prejudices and personal resentments which soured the <sup>the tongue of</sup> Ammianus himself <sup>but they will</sup> BVCL  
n.c.

with philosophic curiosity, the interesting and original picture of the manners of Rome.

"The greatness of Rome" (such is the language of the historian) "was founded on the rare and almost incredible alliance of virtue and fortune. The long period of her infancy was employed in a laborious struggle against the tribes of Italy, the neighbours and enemies of the rising city. In the strength and ardour of youth, she sustained the storms of war; carried her victorious arms beyond the seas and the mountains; and brought home triumphal laurels from every country of the globe. At length, verging towards old age, and sometimes conquering by the terror only of her name, she sought the blessings of ease and tranquillity. The VENERABLE CITY, which had trampled on the necks of the fiercest nations, and established a system of laws, the perpetual guardians of justice and freedom, was content, like a wise and wealthy parent, to devolve on the Cæsars, her favourite sons, the care of governing her ample patrimony. A secure and profound peace, such as had been once enjoyed in the reign of Numa, succeeded to the tumults of a republic; while Rome was still adored as the queen of the earth, and the subject nations still revered the name of the people and the majesty of the senate. But this native splendour" (continues Ammianus) "is degraded and sullied by the conduct of some nobles; who, unmindful of their own dignity and of that of their own country, assume an unbounded licence

Character of  
the Roman  
nobles, by  
Ammianus  
Marcellinus.

of vice and folly. They contend with each other in the empty vanity of titles and surnames ; and curiously select or invent the most lofty and sonorous appellations, Reburrus, or Fabunius, Pagonius, or Tarrasius, which may impress the ears of the vulgar with astonishment and respect. From a vain ambition of perpetuating their memory, they affect to multiply their likeness in statues of bronze and marble ; nor are they satisfied, unless those statues are covered with plates of <sup>10</sup> gold : an honourable distinction, first granted to Acilius the consul, after he had subdued, by his arms and counsels, the power of king Antiochus. The ostentation of displaying, of magnifying perhaps, the rent-roll of the estates which they possess in all the provinces, from the rising to the setting sun, provokes the just resentment of every man who recollects that their poor and invincible ancestors were not distinguished from the meanest of the soldiers by the delicacy of their food or the <sup>20</sup> splendour of their apparel. But the modern nobles measure their rank and consequence according to the loftiness of their chariots and the weighty magnificence of their dress. Their long robes of silk and purple float in the wind ; and, as they are agitated, by art or accident, they occasionally discover the under garments, the rich tunics, embroidered with the figures of various animals. Followed by a train of fifty servants, and tearing up the pavement, they move along the <sup>30</sup> streets with the same impetuous speed as if they travelled with post horses ; and the example of

the senators is boldly imitated by the matrons and ladies, whose covered carriages are continually driving round the immense space of the city and suburbs. Whenever these persons of high distinction condescend to visit the public baths, they assume, on their entrance, a tone of loud and insolent command, and appropriate to their own use the conveniences which were designed for the Roman people. If, in these places of mixed and general resort, they meet any of the infamous ministers of their pleasures, they express their affection by a tender embrace; while they proudly decline the salutations of their fellow-citizens, who are not permitted to aspire above the honour of kissing their hands or their knees. As soon as they have indulged themselves in the refreshment of the bath, they resume their rings, and the other ensigns of their dignity; select from their private wardrobe of the finest linen, such as might suffice for a dozen persons, the garments the most agreeable to their fancy, and maintain till their departure the same haughty demeanour; which perhaps might have been excused in the great Marcellus, after the conquest of Syracuse. Sometimes, indeed, these heroes undertake more arduous achievements; they visit their estates in Italy, and procure themselves, by the toil of servile hands, the amusements of the chase. If at any time, but more especially on a hot day, they have courage to sail, in their painted galleys, from the Lucrine lake to their elegant villas on the sea-coast of Puteoli and Caieta, they compare their own ex-

peditions to the marches of Cæsar and Alexander. Yet should a fly presume to settle on the silken folds of their gilded umbrellas, should a sunbeam penetrate through some unguarded and imperceptible chink, they deplore their intolerable hardships, and lament in affected language that they were not born in the land of the Cimmerians, the regions of eternal darkness. In these journeys into the country the whole body of the household marches with their master. In the same manner 10 as the cavalry and infantry, the heavy and the light armed troops, the advanced guard and the rear, are marshalled by the skill of their military leaders; so the domestic officers, who bear a rod as an ensign of authority, distribute and arrange the numerous train of slaves and attendants. The baggage and wardrobe move in the front; and are immediately followed by a multitude of cooks and inferior ministers employed in the service of the kitchens and of the table. The main body is 20 composed of a promiscuous crowd of slaves, increased by the accidental concourse of idle or dependent plebeians. In the exercise of domestic jurisdiction the nobles of Rome express an exquisite sensibility for any personal injury, and a contemptuous indifference for the rest of the human species. When they have called for warm water, if a slave has been tardy in his obedience, he is instantly chastised with three hundred lashes: but should the same slave commit wilful murder, 30 the master will mildly observe that he is a worthless fellow; but that, if he repeats the offence, he

shall not escape punishment. Hospitality was formerly the virtue of the Romans ; and every stranger who could plead either merit or misfortune was relieved or rewarded by their generosity. At present, if a foreigner, perhaps of no contemptible rank, is introduced to one of the proud and wealthy senators, he is welcomed indeed in the first audience, with such warm professions and such kind inquiries that he retires, enchanted with  
10 the affability of his illustrious friend, and full of regret that he had so long delayed his journey to Rome, the native seat of manners as well as of empire. Secure of a favourable reception, he repeats his visit the ensuing day, and is mortified by the discovery that his person, his name, and his country are already forgotten. If he still has resolution to persevere, he is gradually numbered in the train of dependents, and obtains the permission to pay his assiduous and unprofitable court  
20 to a haughty patron, incapable of gratitude or, friendship ; who scarcely deigns to remark his presence, his departure, or his return. Whenever the rich prepare a solemn and popular entertainment ; whenever they celebrate, with profuse and pernicious luxury, their private banquets ; the choice of the guests is the subject of anxious deliberation. The modest, the sober, and the learned are seldom preferred ; and the nomenclators, who are commonly swayed by interested  
30 motives, have the address to insert, in the list of invitations, the obscure names of the most worthless of mankind. But the frequent and familiar

companions of the great are those parasites who practise the most useful of all arts, the art of flattery ; who eagerly applaud each word and every action of their immortal patron ; gaze with rapture on his marble columns and variegated pavements ; and strenuously praise the pomp and elegance which he is taught to consider as a part of his personal merit. At the Roman tables the birds, the *squirrels*, or the fish, which appear of an uncommon size, are contemplated with curious 10 attention ; a pair of scales is accurately applied to ascertain their real weight ; and, while the more rational guests are disgusted by the vain and tedious repetition, notaries are summoned to attest by an authentic record the truth of such a marvellous event. The acquisition of knowledge seldom engages the curiosity of the nobles, who abhor the fatigue and disdain the advantages of study ; and the only books which they peruse are the satires of Juvenal, and the verbose and fabulous 20 histories of Marius Maximus. The libraries which they have inherited from their fathers are secluded, like dreary sepulchres, from the light of day. But the costly instruments of the theatre, flutes, and enormous lyres, and hydraulic organs, are constructed for their use ; and the harmony of vocal and instrumental music is incessantly repeated in the palaces of Rome. In those palaces sound is preferred to sense ; and the care of the body to that of the mind. It is allowed as a salutary 30 maxim that the light and frivolous suspicion of a contagious malady is of sufficient weight to excuse

the visits of the most intimate friends ; and even the servants who are dispatched to make the decent inquiries are not suffered to return home till they have undergone the ceremony of a previous ablution. Yet this selfish and unmanly delicacy occasionally yields to the more imperious passion of avarice. The prospect of gain will urge a rich and gouty senator as far as Spoleto ; every sentiment of arrogance and dignity is subdued by the hopes of an inheritance, or even of a legacy ; and a wealthy, childless citizen is the most powerful of the Romans. The distress which follows and chastises extravagant luxury often reduces the great to the use of the most humiliating expedients. When they desire to borrow, they employ the base and supplicating style of the slave in the comedy ; but, when they are called upon to pay, they assume the royal and tragic declamation of the grandsons of Hercules. If the demand is repeated, they readily procure some trusty sycophant, instructed to maintain a charge of poison or magic against the insolent creditor ; who is seldom released from prison till he has signed a discharge of the whole debt. These vices, which degrade the moral character of the Romans, are mixed with a puerile superstition that disgraces their understanding. They listen with confidence to the predictions of haruspices, who pretend to read in the entrails of victims the signs of future greatness and prosperity ; and there are many who do not presume either to bathe, or to dine, or to appear in public, till they have diligently

consulted, according to the rules of astrology, the situation of Mercury and the aspect of the moon. It is singular enough that this vain credulity may often be discovered among the profane sceptics, who impiously doubt or deny the existence of a celestial power."

In populous cities which are the seat of commerce and manufactures, the middle ranks of inhabitants, who derive their subsistence from the dexterity or labour State and character of the people of Rome. <sup>10</sup> of their hands, are commonly the most prolific, the most useful, and in that sense the most respectable part of the community. But the plebeians of Rome, who disdained such sedentary and servile arts, had been oppressed from the earliest times, by the weight of debt and usury; and the husbandman, during the term of his military service, was obliged to abandon the cultivation of his farm. The lands of Italy, which had been originally divided among the families of free <sup>20</sup> and indigent proprietors, were insensibly purchased or usurped by the avarice of the nobles; and in the age which preceded the fall of the republic it was computed that only two thousand citizens were possessed of any independent substance. Yet, as long as the people bestowed, by their suffrages, the honours of the state, the command of the legions, and the administration of wealthy provinces, their conscious pride alleviated, in some measure, the hardships of poverty; and their wants were <sup>30</sup> seasonably supplied by the ambitious liberality of the candidates, who aspired to secure a venal

majority in the thirty-five tribes, or the hundred and ninety-three centuries, of Rome. But, when the prodigal commons had imprudently alienated not only the *use*, but the *inheritance*, of power, they sunk, under the reign of the Caesars, into a vile and wretched populace which must, in a few generations, have been totally extinguished, if it had not been continually recruited by the manumission of slaves and the influx of strangers. As early as the time of Hadrian it was the just complaint of the ingenuous natives that the capital had attracted the vices of the universe and the manners of the most opposite nations. The intemperance of the Gauls, the cunning and levity of the Greeks, the savage obstinacy of the Egyptians and Jews, the servile temper of the Asiatics, and the dissolute, effeminate prostitution of the Syrians, were mingled in the various multitude, which, under the proud and false denomination of Romans, presumed to despise their fellow-subjects, and even their sovereigns, who dwelt beyond the precincts of the ETERNAL CITY.

Yet the name of that city was still pronounced with respect : the frequent and capricious tumults of its inhabitants were indulged with impunity ; and the successors of Constantine, instead of crushing the last remains of the democracy by the strong arm of military power, embraced the mild policy of Augustus, and studied to relieve the poverty, and to amuse the idleness, of an innumerable people. I. For the convenience of the lazy plebeians the

Public distribution of  
bread, bacon,  
oil, wine, etc.

monthly distributions of corn were converted into a daily allowance of bread ; a great number of ovens was constructed and maintained at the public expense ; and at the appointed hour each citizen who was furnished with a ticket ascended the flight of steps which had been assigned to his peculiar quarter or division, and received, either as a gift or at a very low price, a loaf of bread of the weight of three pounds for the use of his family.

II. The forests of Lucania, whose acorns fattened <sup>10</sup> large droves of wild hogs, afforded, as a species of tribute, a plentiful supply of cheap and wholesome meat. During five months of the year a regular allowance of bacon was distributed to the poorer citizens ; and the annual consumption of the capital, at a time when it was much declined from its former lustre, was ascertained by an edict of Valentinian the Third, at three millions six hundred and twenty-eight thousand pounds.

III. In the manners of antiquity the use of oil was <sup>20</sup> indispensable for the lamp as well as for the bath ; and the annual tax, which was imposed on Africa for the benefit of Rome, amounted to the weight of three millions of pounds, to the measure, perhaps, of three hundred thousand English gallons.

IV. The anxiety of Augustus to provide the metropolis with sufficient plenty of corn was not extended beyond that necessary article of human subsistence ; and, when the popular clamour accused the dearness and scarcity of wine, a pro-<sup>30</sup> clamation was issued by the grave reformer to remind his subjects that no man could reasonably

complain of thirst since the aqueducts of Agrippa had introduced into the city so many copious streams of pure and salubrious water. This rigid sobriety was insensibly relaxed ; and, although the generous design of Aurelian does not appear to have been executed in its full extent, the use of wine was allowed on very easy and liberal terms. The administration of the public cellars was delegated to a magistrate of honourable rank ;  
10 and a considerable part of the vintage of Campania was reserved for the fortunate inhabitants of Rome.

The stupendous aqueducts, so justly celebrated  
<sup>Use of the</sup> by the praises of Augustus himself, re-  
public baths plenished the *Thermae*, or baths, which had been constructed in every part of the city, with Imperial magnificence. The baths of Antoninus Caracalla, which were open, at stated hours, for the indiscriminate service of the senators and the people, contained about sixteen  
20 hundred scats of marble ; and more than three thousand were reckoned in the baths of Diocletian. The walls of the lofty apartments were covered with curious mosaics, that imitated the art of the pencil in the elegance of design and the variety of colours. The Egyptian granite was beautifully incrusted with the precious green marble of Numidia ; the perpetual stream of hot water was poured into the capacious basons, through so many wide mouths of bright and massy silver ; and the  
30 meanest Roman could purchase, with a small copper coin, the daily enjoyment of a scene of pomp and luxury, which might excite the envy

of the kings of Asia. From these stately palaces issued a swarm of dirty and ragged plebeians, without shoes, and without a mantle ; who loitered away whole days in the street or Forum, to hear news, and to hold disputes ; who dissipated, in extravagant gaming, the miserable pittance of their wives and children ; and spent the hours of the night in obscure taverns in the indulgence of gross and vulgar sensuality.

But the most lively and splendid amusement <sup>10</sup> of the idle multitude depended on the frequent exhibition of public games and <sup>Games and</sup> spectacles. The piety of Christian princes <sup>specacles.</sup> had suppressed the inhuman combats of gladiators ; but the Roman people still considered the Circus as their home, their temple, and the seat of the republic. The impatient crowd rushed at the dawn of day to secure their places, and there were many who passed a sleepless and anxious night in the adjacent porticos. From the morning <sup>20</sup> to the evening, careless of the sun or of the rain, the spectators, who sometimes amounted to the number of four hundred thousand, remained in eager attention ; their eyes fixed on the horses and charioteers, their minds agitated with hope and fear, for the success of the *colours* which they espoused : and the happiness of Rome appeared to hang on the event of a race. The same immoderate ardour inspired their clamours and their applause, as often as they were entertained with <sup>30</sup> the hunting of wild beasts and the various modes of theatrical representation. These representa-

tions in modern capitals may deserve to be considered as a pure and elegant school of taste, and perhaps of virtue. But the Tragic and Comic Muse of the Romans, who seldom aspired beyond the imitation of Attic genius, had been almost totally silent since the fall of the republic; and their place was unworthily occupied by licentious farce, effeminate music, and splendid pageantry. The pantomimes, who maintained their reputation from the age of Augustus to the sixth century, expressed, without the use of words, the various fables of the gods and heroes of antiquity; and the perfection of their art, which sometimes disarmed the gravity of the philosopher, always excited the applause and wonder of the people. The vast and magnificent theatres of Rome were filled by three thousand female dancers, and by three thousand singers, with the masters of the respective choruses. Such was the popular favour which they enjoyed that, in a time of scarcity, when all strangers were banished from the city, the merit of contributing to the public pleasures exempted *them* from a law which was strictly executed against the professors of the liberal arts.

Such was the state of Rome under the reign of Honorius; at the time when the Gothic army

First siege  
of Rome by  
the Goths.  
A.D. 410.

30 formed the siege, or rather the blockade, of the city. By a skilful disposition of his numerous forces, who impatiently watched the moment of an assault, Alaric encompassed the walls, commanded the twelve prin-

cipal gates, intercepted all communication with the adjacent country, and vigilantly guarded the navigation of the Tiber, from which the Romans derived the surest and most plentiful supply of provisions. The first emotions of the nobles and of the people were those of surprise and indignation, that a vile Barbarian should dare to insult the capital of the world ; but their arrogance was soon humbled by misfortune ; and their unmanly rage, instead of being directed against an enemy <sup>10</sup> in arms, was meanly exercised on a defenceless and innocent victim. Perhaps in the person of Serena the Romans might have respected the niece of Theodosius, the aunt, nay even the adopted mother, of the reigning emperor : but they abhorred the widow of Stilicho ; and they listened with credulous passion to the tale of calumny which accused her of maintaining a secret and criminal correspondence with the Gothic invader. Actuated, or overawed, by the same popular frenzy, the <sup>20</sup> senate, without requiring any evidence of her guilt, pronounced the sentence of her death. Serena was ignominiously strangled ; and the infatuated multitude were astonished to find that this cruel act of injustice did not immediately produce the retreat of the Barbarians and the deliverance of the city. That unfortunate city gradually experienced the distress of <sup>30</sup> famine, scarcity, and at length the horrid calamities of famine. The daily allowance of three pounds of bread was reduced to one-half, to one-third, to nothing ; and the price of corn still continued to

rise in a rapid and extravagant proportion. The poorer citizens, who were unable to purchase the necessaries of life, solicited the precarious charity of the rich; and for a while the public misery was alleviated by the humanity of Læta, the widow of the emperor Gratian, who had fixed her residence at Rome, and consecrated to the use of the indigent the princely revenue which she annually received from the grateful successors <sup>10</sup> of her husband. But these private and temporary donatives were insufficient to appease the hunger of a numerous people; and the progress of famine invaded the marble palaces of the senators themselves. The persons of both sexes, who had been educated in the enjoyment of ease and luxury, discovered how little is requisite to supply the demands of nature; and lavished their unavailing treasures of gold and silver, to obtain the coarse and scanty sustenance which they would formerly <sup>20</sup> have rejected with disdain. The food the most repugnant to sense or imagination, the aliments the most unwholesome and pernicious to the constitution, were eagerly devoured and fiercely disputed by the rage of hunger. A dark suspicion was entertained that some desperate wretches fed on the bodies of their fellow-creatures, whom they had secretly murdered; and even mothers (such was the horrid conflict of the two most powerful instincts implanted by nature in the human breast) <sup>30</sup>—even mothers are said to have tasted the flesh of their slaughtered infants! Many thousands of the inhabitants of Rome expired in their houses,

or in the streets, for want of sustenance ; and, as the public sepulchres without the walls were in the power of the enemy, the stench which arose from so many putrid and unburied carcases infected the air, and the miseries of famine were succeeded and aggravated by the contagion of pestilential disease. The assurances of speedy and effectual relief, which were repeatedly transmitted from the court of Ravenna, supported for some time the fainting resolution of the Romans, till at length the despair of any human aid tempted them to accept the offers of supernatural deliverance. Pompeianus, prefect of the city, had been persuaded, by the art or fanaticism of some Tuscan diviners, that, by the mysterious force of spells and sacrifices, they could extract the lightning from the clouds, and point those celestial fires against the camp of the Barbarians. The important secret was communicated to Innocent, the bishop of Rome ; and the successor of St. Peter is accused, perhaps without foundation, of preferring the safety of the republic to the rigid severity of the Christian worship. But, when the question was agitated in the senate ; when it was proposed, as an essential condition, that those sacrifices should be performed in the Capitol, by the authority, and in the presence of the magistrates ; the majority of that respectable assembly, apprehensive either of the Divine or of the Imperial displeasure, refused to join in an act which appeared almost equivalent to the public restoration of Paganism.

The last resource of the Romans was in the clemency, or at least in the moderation, of the king of the Goths. The senate, who in Alaric accepts a ransom, and raises the siege. powers of government, appointed two ambassadors to negotiate with the enemy. This important trust was delegated to Basilius, a senator, of Spanish extraction, and already conspicuous in the administration of provinces; and to John, 10 the first tribune of the notaries, who was peculiarly qualified by his dexterity in business as well as by his former intimacy with the Gothic prince. When they were introduced into his presence, they declared, perhaps in a more lofty style than became their abject condition, that the Romans were resolved to maintain their dignity, either in peace or war; and that, if Alaric refused them a fair and honourable capitulation, he might sound his trumpets, and prepare to give battle to an in- 20 numerable people, exercised in arms and animated by despair. "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed," was the concise reply of the Barbarian; and this rustic metaphor was accompanied by a loud and insulting laugh, expressive of his contempt for the menaces of an unwarlike populace, enervated by luxury before they were emaciated by famine. He then condescended to fix the ransom, which he would accept as the price of his retreat from the walls of Rome: *all* the gold 30 and silver in the city, whether it were the property of the state or of individuals; *all* the rich and precious moveables; and *all* the slaves who

could prove their title to the name of *Barbarians*. The ministers of the senate presumed to ask, in a modest and suppliant tone, " If such, O king ! are your demands, what do you intend to leave us ? " " YOUR LIVES," replied the haughty conqueror : they trembled and retired. Yet, before they retired, a short suspension of arms was granted, which allowed some time for a more temperate negotiation. The stern features of Alaric were insensibly relaxed ; he abated much of the rigour <sup>10</sup> of his terms ; and at length consented to raise the siege, on the immediate payment of five thousand pounds of gold, of thirty thousand pounds of silver, of four thousand robes of silk, of three thousand pieces of fine scarlet cloth, and of three thousand pounds weight of pepper. But the public treasury was exhausted ; the annual rents of the great estates in Italy and the provinces were intercepted by the calamities of war ; the gold and gems had been exchanged during the famine for the vilest <sup>20</sup> sustenance ; the hoards of secret wealth were still concealed by the obstinacy of avarice ; and some remains of consecrated spoils afforded the only resource that could avert the impending ruin of the city.

## ATTILA.

No name in history is more terrible than that of Attila, king of the Huns, **THE SCOURGE OF GOD**, as he was called by later generations. He invaded both the Eastern and the Western Empire. Repulsed at the battle of Châlons in 450, he soon recovered strength and invaded Italy from the north-east. Though he never reached Rome, he was more dreaded as an invader than Alaric the Goth because he was far more barbaric. Venice is said to have been founded by the inhabitants of Aquileia retreating to the lagoons from before him ; but this may be only legend. After devastating the north of Italy Attila turned back, yielding, it was said, to the intercession of Pope Leo. He died in 453.

**A**TTILA, the son of Mundzuk, deduced his noble, perhaps his regal, descent from the ancient Huns, who had formerly Attila's figure and character. tended with the monarchs of China. His features, according to the observation of a Gothic historian, bore the stamp of his national origin ; and the portrait of Attila exhibits the genuine deformity of a modern Calmuck : a large head, a swarthy complexion, small, deep-seated eyes, a flat nose, a few hairs in the place of a beard, broad shoulders, and a short square body, of nervous strength, though of a disproportioned

form. The haughty step and demeanour of the king of the Huns expressed the consciousness of his superiority above the rest of mankind ; and he had a custom of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if he wished to enjoy the terror which he inspired. Yet this savage hero was not inaccessible to pity : his suppliant enemies might confide in the assurance of peace or pardon ; and Attila was considered by his subjects as a just and indulgent master. He delighted in war ; but, after he had ascended the <sup>10</sup> throne in a mature age, his head, rather than his hand, achieved the conquest of the North ; and the fame of an adventurous soldier was usefully exchanged for that of a prudent and successful general. The effects of personal valour are so inconsiderable, except in poetry or romance, that victory, even among Barbarians, must depend on the degree of skill with which the passions of the multitude are combined and guided for the service of a single man. The Scythian conquerors, Attila <sup>20</sup> and Zingis, surpassed their rude countrymen in art rather than in courage ; and it may be observed that the monarchies, both of the Huns and of the Moguls, were erected by their founders on the basis of popular superstition. The miraculous conception, which fraud and credulity ascribed to the virgin-mother of Zingis, raised him above the level of human nature ; and the naked prophet, who, in the name of the Deity, invested him with the empire of the earth, pointed the valour of the <sup>30</sup> Moguls with irresistible enthusiasm. The religious arts of Attila were not less skilfully adapted to

the character of his age and country. It was natural enough that the Scythians should adore, with peculiar devotion, the god of war; but, as they were incapable of forming either an abstract idea or a corporeal representation, they worshipped their tutelar deity under the symbol of an iron cimeter. One of the shepherds of the Huns perceived that a heifer, who was grazing, had wounded herself in the foot, and curiously followed the track of the blood, till he discovered, among the long grass, the point of an ancient sword, which he dug out of the ground and presented to Attila. That magnanimous, or rather that artful, prince accepted, with pious gratitude, this celestial favour; and, as the rightful possessor of the *sword of Mars*, asserted his divine and indefeasible claim to the dominion of the earth. If the rites of Scythia were practised on this solemn occasion, a lofty altar, or rather pile of faggots, three hundred yards in length and in breadth, was raised in a spacious plain; and the sword of Mars was placed erect on the summit of this rustic altar, which was annually consecrated by the blood of sheep, horses, and of the hundredth captive. Whether human sacrifices formed any part of the worship of Attila, or whether he propitiated the god of war with the victims which he continually offered in the field of battle, the favourite of Mars soon acquired a sacred character, which rendered his conquests more easy, and more permanent; and the Barbarian princes confessed, in the language of devotion and flattery, that they

*He discovers  
the sword of  
Mars.*

could not presume to gaze, with a steady eye, on the divine majesty of the king of the Huns. His brother Bleda, who reigned over a con- A.D. 445.  
siderable part of the nation, was compelled to resign his sceptre and his life. Yet even this cruel act was attributed to a supernatural impulse ; and the vigour with which Attila wielded the sword of Mars convinced the world that it had been reserved alone for his invincible arm. But the extent of his empire affords the only remaining evidence of the number and importance of his victories ; and the Scythian monarch, however ignorant of the value of science and philosophy, might, perhaps, lament that his illiterate subjects were destitute of the art which could perpetuate the memory of his exploits.

Neither the spirit nor the forces nor the reputation of Attila were impaired by the failure of the Gallic expedition. In the en- Invasion of Italy by Attila. A.D. 451.  
suing spring, he repeated his demand of the princess Honoria and her patri-  
monial treasures. The demand was again rejected, or eluded ; and the indignant lover immediately took the field, passed the Alps, invaded Italy, and besieged Aquileia with an innumerable host of Barbarians. Those Barbarians were unskilled in the methods of conducting a regular siege, which, even among the ancients, required some knowledge, or at least some practice, of the mechanic arts. But the labour of many thousand provin- 30  
cials and captives, whose lives were sacrificed

without pity, might execute the most painful and dangerous work. The skill of the Roman artists might be corrupted to the destruction of their country. The walls of Aquileia were assaulted by a formidable train of battering rams, moveable turrets, and engines, that threw stones, darts, and fire ; and the monarch of the Huns employed the forcible impulse of hope, fear, emulation, and interest, to subvert the only barrier which delayed <sup>10</sup> the conquest of Italy. Aquileia was at that period one of the richest, the most populous, and the strongest of the maritime cities of the Adriatic coast. The Gothic auxiliaries, who appear to have served under their native princes Alaric and Antala, communicated their intrepid spirit ; and the citizens still remembered the glorious and successful resistance, which their ancestors had opposed to a fierce, inexorable Barbarian, who disgraced the majesty of the <sup>20</sup> Roman purple. Three months were consumed without effect in the siege of Aquileia ; till the want of provisions, and the clamours of his army, compelled Attila to relinquish the enterprise, and reluctantly to issue his orders that the troops should strike their tents the next morning and begin their retreat. But, as he rode round the walls, pensive, angry, and disappointed, he observed a stork preparing to leave her nest, in one of the towers, and to fly with her infant <sup>30</sup> family towards the country. He seized, with the ready penetration of a statesman, this trifling incident, which chance had offered to superstition ;

and exclaimed, in a loud and cheerful tone, that such a domestic bird, so constantly attached to human society, would never have abandoned her ancient seats, unless those towers had been devoted to impending ruin and solitude. The favourable omen inspired an assurance of victory; the siege was renewed, and prosecuted with fresh vigour; a large breach was made in the part of the wall from whence the stork had taken her flight; the Huns mounted to the assault with 10 irresistible fury; and the succeeding generation could scarcely discover the ruins of Aquileia. After this dreadful chastisement, Attila pursued his march; and, as he passed, the cities of Altinum, Concordia, and Padua, were reduced into heaps of stones and ashes. The inland towns, Vicenza, Verona, and Bergamo, were exposed to the rapacious cruelty of the Huns. Milan and Pavia submitted, without resistance, to the loss of their wealth; and applauded the unusual clemency, 20 which preserved from the flames the public, as well as private, buildings; and spared the lives of the captive multitude. The popular traditions of Comum, Turin, or Modena, may justly be suspected; yet they concur with more authentic evidence to prove that Attila spread his ravages over the rich plains of modern Lombardy: which are divided by the Po, and bounded by the Alps and Apennine. When he took possession of the royal palace of Milan, he was surprised, and 30 offended, at the sight of a picture, which represented the Caesars seated on their throne and the

princes of Scythia prostrate at their feet. The revenge which Attila inflicted on this monument of Roman vanity was harmless and ingenious. He commanded a painter to reverse the figures and the attitudes; and the emperors were delineated on the same canvas, approaching in a suppliant posture to empty their bags of tributary gold before the throne of the Scythian monarch. The spectators must have confessed the truth and propriety of the alteration; and were perhaps tempted to apply, on this singular occasion, the well-known fable of the dispute between the lion and the man.

It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila, that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod. Yet the savage destroyer undesignedly laid the foundations of a republic which revived, in the feudal state of Europe, the art and spirit of commercial industry. The celebrated name of Venice, or Venetia, was formerly diffused over a large and fertile province of Italy, from the confines of Pannonia to the river Addua, and from the Po to the Rhætian and Julian Alps. Before the irruption of the Barbarians, fifty Venetian cities flourished in peace and prosperity; Aquileia was placed in the most conspicuous station; but the ancient dignity of Padua was supported by agriculture and manufactures; and the property of five hundred citizens, who were entitled to the equestrian rank, must have amounted, at the strictest computation, to one million seven hundred thousand

Foundation of the republic of Venice.

pounds. Many families of Aquileia, Padua, and the adjacent towns, who fled from the sword of the Huns, found a safe, though obscure, refuge in the neighbouring islands. At the extremity of the Gulf, where the Adriatic feebly <sup>A.D. 451.</sup> imitates the tides of the ocean, near an hundred small islands are separated by shallow water from the continent, and protected from the waves by several long slips of land, which admit the entrance of vessels through some secret and narrow channels, <sup>10</sup> Till the middle of the fifth century, these remote and sequestered spots remained without cultivation, with few inhabitants, and almost without a name. But the manners of the Venetian fugitives, their arts and their government, were gradually formed by their new situation; and one of the epistles of Cassiodorus, which describes their condition about seventy years afterwards, may be considered as the primitive monument of the republic. The minister of Theodoric compares <sup>20</sup> them, in his quaint declamatory style, to water-fowl, who had fixed their nests on the bosom of the waves; and, though he allows that the Venetian provinces had formerly contained many noble families, he insinuates that they were now reduced by misfortune to the same level of humble poverty. Fish was the common, and almost the universal, food of every rank; their only treasure consisted in the plenty of salt, which they extracted from the sea; and the exchange of that commodity, <sup>30</sup> so essential to human life, was substituted in the neighbouring markets to the currency of gold and

silver. A people, whose habitations might be doubtfully assigned to the earth or water, soon became alike familiar with the two elements; and the demands of avarice succeeded to those of necessity. The islanders, who, from Grado to Chiozza, were intimately connected with each other, penetrated into the heart of Italy by the secure, though laborious, navigation of the rivers and inland canals. Their vessels, which were continually increasing in size and number, visited all the harbours of the Gulf; and the marriage, which Venice annually celebrates with the Hadriatic, was contracted in her early infancy. The epistle of Cassiodorus, the Praetorian praefect, is addressed to the maritime tribunes; and he exhorts them, in a mild tone of authority, to animate the zeal of their countrymen for the public service, which required their assistance to transport the magazines of wine and oil from the province of Istria to the royal city of Ravenna. The ambiguous office of these magistrates is explained by the tradition that, in the twelve principal islands, twelve tribunes, or judges, were created by an annual and popular election. The existence of the Venetian republic under the Gothic kingdom of Italy is attested by the same authentic record, which annihilates their lofty claim of original and perpetual independence. The Italians, who had long since renounced the

<sup>30</sup> Attila gives exercise of arms, after <sup>Peace to the</sup> forty years' peace, by the approach of a formidable Barbarian, whom they abhorred, as

the enemy of their religion as well as of their republic. Amidst the general consternation, Aetius alone was incapable of fear ; but it was impossible that he shoud achieve, alone and unassisted, any military exploits worthy of his former renown. The Barbarians who had defended Gaul refused to march to the relief of Italy ; and the succours promised by the Eastern emperor were distant and doubtful. Since Aetius, at the head of his domestic troops, still maintained the field, and <sup>10</sup> harassed or retarded the march of Attila, he never shewed himself more truly great than at the time when his conduct was blamed by an ignorant and ungrateful people. If the mind of Valentinian had been susceptible of any generous sentiments, he would have chosen such a general for his example and his guide. But the timid grandson of Theodosius, instead of sharing the dangers, escaped from the sound, of war ; and his hasty retreat from Ravenna to Rome, from <sup>20</sup> an impregnable fortress to an open capital, betrayed his secret intention of abandoning Italy as soon as the danger should approach his Imperial person. This shameful abdication was suspended, however, by the spirit of doubt and delay, which commonly adheres to pusillanimous counsels, and sometimes corrects their pernicious tendency. The Western emperor, with the senate and people of Rome, embraced the more salutary resolution of deprecating, by a solemn and suppliant em- <sup>30</sup> bassy, the wrath of Attila. This important commission was accepted by Avienus, who, from

his birth and riches, his consular dignity, the numerous train of his clients, and his personal abilities, held the first rank in the Roman senate. The specious and artful character of Avienus was admirably qualified to conduct a negotiation either of public or private interest; his colleague Trigettius had exercised the Praetorian prefecture of Italy; and Leo, bishop of Rome, consented to expose his life for the safety of his flock. The genius of Leo was exercised and displayed in the public misfortunes; and he has deserved the appellation of *Great* by the successful zeal with which he laboured to establish his opinions and his authority, under the venerable names of orthodox faith and ecclesiastical discipline. The Roman ambassadors were introduced to the tent of Attila, as he lay encamped at the place where the slow-winding Mincius is lost in the foaming waves of the lake Benacus, and trampled, with his Scythian cavalry, the farms of Catullus and Virgil. The Barbarian monarch listened with favourable, and even respectful, attention; and the deliverance of Italy was purchased by the immense ransom, or dowry, of the princess Honoria. The state of his army might facilitate the treaty, and hasten his retreat. Their martial spirit was relaxed by the wealth and indolence of a warm climate. The shepherds of the North, whose ordinary food consisted of milk and raw flesh, indulged themselves too freely in the use of bread, of wine, and of meat prepared and seasoned by the arts of cookery; and the progress of disease

revenged in some measure the injuries of the Italians. When Attila declared his resolution of carrying his victorious arms to the gates of Rome, he was admonished by his friends, as well as by his enemies, that Alaric had not long survived the conquest of the eternal city. His mind, superior to real danger, was assaulted by imaginary terrors; nor could he escape the influence of superstition, which had so often been subservient to his designs. The pressing eloquence of Leo, his majestic aspect <sup>10</sup> and sacerdotal robes, excited the veneration of Attila for the spiritual father of the Christians. The apparition of the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, who menaced the Barbarian with instant death, if he rejected the prayer of their successor, is one of the noblest legends of ecclesiastical tradition. The safety of Rome might deserve the interposition of celestial beings; and some indulgence is due to a fable which has been represented by the pencil of Raphael and the <sup>20</sup> chisel of Algardi.

Before the king of the Huns evacuated Italy, he threatened to return more dreadful and more implacable, if his bride, the princess <sup>The death of</sup> <sup>Attila.</sup> Honoria, were not delivered to his <sup>A.D. 453.</sup> ambassadors within the term stipulated by the treaty. Yet, in the meanwhile, Attila relieved his tender anxiety by adding a beautiful maid, whose name was Ildico, to the list of his innumerable wives. Their marriage was celebrated with bar- <sup>30</sup> baric pomp and festivity at his wooden palace beyond the Danube; and the monarch, oppressed

with wine and sleep, retired, at a late hour, from the banquet to the nuptial bed. His attendants continued to respect his privacy, or his repose, the greatest part of the ensuing day, till the unusual silence alarmed their fears and suspicions ; and, after attempting to awaken Attila by loud and repeated cries, they at length broke into the royal apartment. They found the trembling bride sitting by the bedside, hiding her face with her veil, and lamenting her own danger as well as the death of the king, who had expired during the night. An artery had suddenly burst ; and, as Attila lay in a supine posture, he was suffocated by a torrent of blood, which, instead of finding a passage through the nostrils, regurgitated into the lungs and stomach. His body was solemnly exposed in the midst of the plain, under a silken pavilion ; and the chosen squadrons of the Huns, wheeling round in measured evolutions, chanted a funeral song to the memory of a hero, glorious in his life, invincible in his death, the father of his people, the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world. According to their national custom, the Barbarians cut off a part of their hair, gashed their faces with unseemly wounds, and bewailed their valiant leader as he deserved, not with the tears of women, but with the blood of warriors. The remains of Attila were enclosed within three coffins, of gold, of silver, and of iron, and privately buried in the night : the spoils of nations were thrown into his grave ; the captives who had opened the ground were inhumanly massacred ;

and the same Huns, who had indulged such excessive grief, feasted, with dissolute and intemperate mirth, about the recent sepulchre of their king. It was reported at Constantinople that on the fortunate night in which he expired Marcian beheld in a dream the bow of Attila broken asunder ; and the report may be allowed to prove how seldom the image of that formidable Barbarian was absent from the mind of a Roman emperor.

## V.

## THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

A MONG the insipid legends of ecclesiastical history, I am tempted to distinguish the memorable fable of the **SEVEN SLEEPERS**; whose imaginary date corresponds with the reign of the younger Theodosius and the conquest of Africa by the Vandals. When the emperor Decius persecuted the Christians, seven noble youths of Ephesus concealed themselves in a spacious cavern in the side of an adjacent mountain; where they were doomed to perish by the tyrant, who gave orders that the entrance should be firmly secured with a pile of huge stones. They immediately fell into a deep slumber, which was miraculously prolonged, without injuring the powers of life, during a period of one hundred and eighty-seven years. At the end of that time, the slaves of Adolius, to whom the inheritance of the mountain had descended, removed the stones, to supply materials for some rustic edifice; the light of the sun darted into the cavern, and the seven sleepers were permitted to awake. After a slumber, as they thought, of a few hours, they were pressed by the calls of hunger; and resolved that Jamblichus, one of their

number, should secretly return to the city, to purchase bread for the use of his companions. The youth (if we may still employ that appellation) could no longer recognise the once familiar aspect of his native country; and his surprise was increased by the appearance of a large cross, triumphantly erected over the principal gate of Ephesus. His singular dress and obsolete language confounded the baker, to whom he offered an ancient medal of Decius as the current coin of the <sup>10</sup> empire; and Jamblichus, on the suspicion of a secret treasure, was dragged before the judge. Their mutual inquiries produced the amazing discovery that two centuries were almost elapsed since Jamblichus and his friends had escaped from the rage of a Pagan tyrant. The bishop of Ephesus, the clergy, the magistrates, the people, and, as it is said, the emperor Theodosius himself, hastened to visit the cavern of the Seven Sleepers; who bestowed their benediction, related their <sup>20</sup> story, and at the same instant peaceably expired. The origin of this marvellous fable cannot be ascribed to the pious fraud and credulity of the *modern* Greeks, since the authentic tradition may be traced within half a century of the supposed miracle. James of Sarug, a Syrian bishop, who was born only two years after the death of the younger Theodosius, has devoted one of his two hundred and thirty homilies to the praise of the young men of Ephesus. Their legend, before the <sup>30</sup> end of the sixth century, was translated from the Syriac into the Latin language, by the care of

Gregory of Tours. The hostile communions of the East preserve their memory with equal reverence; and their names are honourably inscribed in the Roman, the Abyssinian, and the Russian calendar. Nor has their reputation been confined to the Christian world. This popular tale, which Mahomet might learn when he drove his camels to the fairs of Syria, is introduced, as a divine revelation, into the Koran. The story of the Seven Sleepers has been adopted, and adorned, by the nations, from Bengal to Africa, who profess the Mahometan religion; and some vestiges of a similar tradition have been discovered in the remote extremities of Scandinavia. This easy and universal belief, so expressive of the sense of mankind, may be ascribed to the genuine merit of the fable itself. We imperceptibly advance from youth to age, without observing the gradual, but incessant, change of human affairs, and, even in our larger experiences of history, the imagination is accustomed, by a perpetual series of causes and effects, to unite the most distant revolutions. But, if the interval between two memorable æras could be instantly annihilated; if it were possible, after a momentary slumber of two hundred years, to display the *new* world to the eyes of a spectator, who still retained a lively and recent impression of the *old*; his surprise and his reflections would furnish the pleasing subject of a philosophical romance. The scene could not be more advantageously placed than in the two centuries which elapsed between the reigns of Decius and of

Theodosius the younger. During this period, the seat of government had been transported from Rome to a new city on the banks of the Thracian Bosphorus ; and the abuse of military spirit had been suppressed by an artificial system of tame and ceremonious servitude. The throne of the persecuting Decius was filled by a succession of Christian and orthodox princes, who had extirpated the fabulous gods of antiquity ; and the public devotion of the age was impatient to exalt to the saints and martyrs of the Catholic church on the altars of Diana and Hercules. The union of the Roman empire was dissolved ; its genius was humbled in the dust ; and armies of unknown Barbarians, issuing from the frozen regions of the North, had established their victorious reign over the fairest provinces of Europe and Africa.

## NOTES.

### L. AURELIAN AND ZENOBIA.

1. 22. Tetricus, the commander of the Roman legions in Gaul who had assumed the title of Imperator.

2. 25. Longinus, a Greek teacher of rhetoric, born at Athens about 213 A.D. Zenobia made him minister to her court. Gibbon calls him sublime as the traditional author of the treatise *On the Sublime* (*i.e.*, on a lofty literary style). But this treatise is now believed to have been written two hundred years earlier. The author's name may have been Longinus, but nothing is known of him.

3. 28. dominion of the East. Palmyra was inside the Roman Empire, and officially Odenathus was governor of the East (*dua Orientis*) under the Roman Emperor; but he behaved as an independent ruler.

3. 10. the Great King, the king of Parthia, or Persia, as the great empire of the East was now called once more under the rule of the Sassanidae, who claimed descent from Cyrus and Darius.

17. captive emperor, Valerian, taken prisoner by the Persians in 260 A.D.

18. insensible, incapable of feeling, ungrateful.

4. 9. Augustus. The title had been confined to the Emperor in Rome. Marcus Aurelius, however, gave it to his colleague Verus, and Severus (died 211) gave it to his two sons. Its use by a prince of Palmyra is a sign that the Empire is beginning to break up.

6. 1. Apollonius of Tyana, a philosopher who lived in the first century A.D., and who by his reputed miracles obtained such a hold on the people that he was worshipped as a god and set up as a rival to Christ.

8. 8. Trajan had conquered Parthia, 116 A.D.

9. 9. ballista, military engines, resembling a huge crossbow, from which stones and darts were discharged to a great distance.

30. Sapor, king of Persia.

15. 20. Caelian Hill, one of the "seven hills" of Rome; the *Quirinal* (16. 24) is another.

25. *civile corona* (*civica corona*) of oak-leaves, awarded in ancient times for saving a citizen's life in battle. One was hung over the door-post of Augustus's house in token that he had saved his fellow-citizens (Ovid, *Tristia* III. i. 48).

16. 14. *donatives*, presents of money.

## II. JULIAN'S LAST CAMPAIGN.

21. 9. the Surensas, the chief satrap or Grand Visier of the Persians.

10. *obediensial crown*, properly presented for bravery in the defence of a besieged town: it was a chaplet of woven grass. A mural crown might rather be expected here: see note on 25. 12.

22. 4. Fabritius, the Roman conqueror of Pyrrhus.

23. 2. the sophist of Antioch, Libanius: see note on 25. 17 below.

27. Sassanides, the dynasty then reigning in Persia.

25. 17. Libanius, a Greek rhetorician, born at Antioch in Syria, who taught publicly at Athens and Constantinople and afterwards in his native city. The Emperor Julian was his admirer and patron. Many of his speeches, letters, and rhetorical exercises are preserved.

27. 15. Homer. "A similar disposition is ascribed to the wise Nestor in the fourth book of the Iliad; and Homer was never absent from the mind of Julian" (Gibbon's note).

28. 12. *mural crown*, with embossed ornaments, given for the storming of a wall; *naval crown*, with ornaments representing the beak of a ship, given to the man who first boarded an enemy's ship.

21. Jovians and Herennians, the titles given to two legions from Illyria brought to Rome by the Emperor Diocletian to supply the place of the praetorian guards (Gibbon, ch. xiii.).

30. 17. Hormisdas, a Persian prince of the Sassanid family who had fled to Constantinople and risen high in the favour of his Roman master. Julian had made him general.

31. 17. Arbela, where Alexander the Great had defeated Darius, B.C. 331.

32. 16. Gregory and Augustin, two of the four great Latin "fathers" of the Church, the other two being Ambrose and Jerome. Augustine (354-430) was bishop of Hippo in Africa; Gregory the Great was pope from 590 to 604.

38. 15. Genius, guardian spirit. Families, societies, cities, and peoples had their Genius as well as individuals. The Genius of the

Roman people stood in the forum, represented in the form of a bearded man crowned with a diadem, a *carmagia* (horn of abundance) in his right hand, and a sceptre in his left (Seyffert).

25. Tuscan haruspex, Etruscan soothsayers. The Romans learnt from the ancient Etruscans the practice of divining future events from the appearance of the entrails of sacrificed animals.

40. 10. master of the offices, *magister officiorum*, an officer of the imperial household.

41. 8. separation . . . substance, the freeing of the soul from the body.

10. "Herodotus (I. xxii) has displayed that doctrine in an agreeable tale. Yet the Jupiter (Iliad XVI) who laments with tears of blood the death of Sarpedon his son had a very imperfect notion of happiness or glory beyond the grave" (Gibbon's note).

32. art of divination : see note on 38 25.

42. 22. military testament. Soldiers who made their wills on actual service were exempted from the formalities of Roman law.

31. with the stars. "This union of the human soul with the divine ethereal substance of the universe is the ancient doctrine of Pythagoras and Plato; but it seems to exclude any personal or conscious immortality" (Gibbon's note).

### III. ROME AND ALARIC.

45. 2. Ravenna, to which the Emperor Honorius had withdrawn his court from Rome.

46. 6. the Flaminian way, the great north road from Rome to Ariminum on the Adriatic, constructed by Flaminius in 220 B.C.

9. Clitumnus. Its white oxen are mentioned by Virgil, *Georgic*, II. 146. Cp. Macaulay, *Horatius*:

"Beyond all streams Clitumnus  
Is to the herdsman dear."

47. 1. consuls, the two highest magistrates of the Republic, elected annually. Censors, two in number under the Republic, elected every five years; the highest office in distinction, though not in power. It was their duty to take the census of citizens, and they had the power of degrading unworthy senators and citizens. Dictator, under the Republic an exceptional magistrate appointed for six months only in times of stress: superseded all existing magistrates.

48. 7. Jerom, or Jerome (d. 420), author of the standard Latin version of the Scriptures known as the Vulgate. Claudian, a Latin poet of some merit born at Alexandria in the second half of the fourth century A.D.

48. 26-29. "These comparisons were used by Cineas, the counsellor of Pyrrhus, after his return from his embassy, in which he had diligently studied the discipline and manners of Rome" (Gibbon).

49. 6. Theodosian age, end of fourth century A.D.

50. 1. praetorship, a magistracy at Rome regarded as a stepping-stone to the consulship.

9. Actian victory, the battle of Actium, on the coast of Epirus, won by Augustus over Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C.

29. Pliny the elder, author of the voluminous *Historia Naturalis*, 23-79 A.D.

30. Scipio Africanus the younger, conquered Carthage in 146 B.C.

51. 19. state, i.e. description of the state.

22. Ammianus Marcellinus, the last Roman historian of any importance, born at Antioch about 330 A.D. He wrote a Latin history of the emperors from Nerva to Valens.

52. 24. Numa, a legendary king of early Rome.

53. 12. Atilius Glabrio, consul 191 B.C., defeated Antiochus, king of Syria, at Thermopylae.

54. 23. Marcellus captured Syracuse in the second Punic war, B.C. 212.

30. the Lucrine lake, a land-locked pool on the coast of Campania, close to Baiae. Agrippa, the general of Augustus, strengthened the bank between the lake and the sea with masonry and made an entrance in it for ships, so converting the Lucrine into 'the Julian harbour.' The lake was nearly filled up by an earthquake in 1538.

55. 7. Cimmerians, described by Homer, *Odyssey*, xi. 14, as living near the entrance to Hades, 'shrouded in mist and cloud.'

56. 28. nomenclator, a slave whose duty it was to report to his master the names of his slaves, of visitors, and of those who met him in his walks abroad. The duty was specially important when the master was a candidate for office.

57. 20. Juvenal, the greatest of Roman satirists, 47-130 A.D.

21. Marius Maximus, lived in early part of third century A.D. and wrote lives of the emperors in continuation of the biographies of Suetonius. His work is lost.

58. 8. Spoleto, the Italian name of Spoletum, a town in Umbria.

19. grandsons of Hercules. The descendants of Hercules, called Hercildae, give their name to one of the tragedies of Euripides.

28. haruspices : see note on 38. 25.

59. 14. plebeians, the common people of Rome. The full citizenship was at first confined to the patricians, the descendants of the original families of Rome.

60. i. tribes . . . centuries. Two divisions of the Roman people on which the two great assemblies were based. The Assembly of the Centuries elected the consuls and most of the higher magistrates; the Assembly of the Tribes elected the lower magistrates and passed most of the laws.

- 10. Hadrian, emperor 117-138 A.D.
- 11. ingenuous, used in its original Latin sense, 'free-born.'
- 61. 18. Valentinian the Third, emperor 425-455.
- 62. i. Agrippa, the great minister and general of Augustus.
- 17. Caracalla, emperor 211-217.
- 21. Diocletian, emperor 285-304.
- 64. 5. Attic, Athenian.
- 65. 14. Theodosius, emperor 383-395; father of Honorius.
- 16. Stilicho, minister and general of the western empire.
- 67. 15. Tuscan diviners: see note on 28. 25.
- 68. 10. first tribune of the notaries, Lat. *primicerius notariorum*, the chief of the secretaries.

#### IV. ATTILA.

71. 21. Singis (Zenghis or Jenghis Khan), a Mongol emperor who invaded Northern China in 1206, and by a succession of victories, which are said to have cost five million lives, added Northern China, Eastern Persia, and the whole of Tartary to his dominions.

72. 7. cimeter, scimitar, short curved sword.

76. 12. fable. A man disputed with a lion which was the braver, and as they sought for evidence in their contention they came to a tomb, on which the man pointed to a representation of a lion strangled by a man. The lion answered, "This was drawn by a man's hand. You would see the man vanquished if lions knew how to draw" (*Phaedrus*, Appendix 25).

18. This tradition of the foundation of Venice, though it has been generally accepted, is not proved by any contemporary evidence. The authentic history of Venice cannot be said to begin before the election of her first Doge in 697.

77. 17. Cassiodorus (or Cassiodorus), the learned minister of Theodoric, the great king of the Goths in Italy. He founded the famous monastery of Vivarium, and retired to it in old age. His desire was that the monasteries should be homes of learning, classical as well as Christian.

78. 11. the marriage, "the going out of the Doge from the Lido to wed the sea," a festival instituted to commemorate the victory of Venice over the Dalmatians in 998. The ceremony was performed

annually on Ascension Day, and had the effect of proclaiming to Europe the supremacy of Venice over the Adriatic. Cp. Wordsworth, *Sonnet on the Extinction of the Venetian Republic*:

"She was a maiden city, bright and free ;  
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;  
And when she took unto herself a mate,  
She must espouse the everlasting Sea."

20. Istria, a small province adjoining Italy, on the north coast of the Adriatic; the district round Trieste.

79. 2. Attius, the chief general of the western empire at this time.

80. 18. Mincus, the modern Mincio. Milton alludes to it in *Lycidas* as Virgil's native river ("Smooth-sliding Mincius crowned with vocal reeds").

19. Benacus, the Lago di Garda. The poet Catullus had a villa on its banks, at Sirmio. See Tennyson's exquisite little poem, *Frater Ave atque Vale*.

81. 20. Raphael's fresco of the meeting of Leo and Attila is in the Vatican. Algardi's sculptured relief is in St. Peter's, Rome.

82. 15. regurgitated, poured back.

83. 5. Marcian, the eastern emperor.

#### V. THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.

84. 5. the younger Theodosius, emperor of the East, d. 450 A.D.

6. Decius, 249-251 A.D.

85. 4. the Abyssinian calendar of saints. Eastern Africa has had its own form of Christianity from very early times; the worship of saints plays a large part in it.

5. the Russian calendar, calendar of saints of the Greek Church.

## QUESTIONS.

[*These Questions are not an examination paper. They are merely intended to suggest profitable lines of study.]*

1. By whom and on what occasion were these words used?—
  - (a) "I have considered the happiness of the people as the end of government."
  - (b) "I disdained to consider as Roman Emperors an Aureolus or a Gallienus."
  - (c) "The thicker the hay, the easier it is mowed."
2. Express in more modern English:—
  - (a) "The separation of the nobler substance should be the subject of joy, rather than of affliction" (p. 41).
  - (b) "The safety of Rome might deserve the interposition of celestial beings; and some indulgence is due to a fable which has been represented by the pencil of Raphael and the chisel of Algardi" (p. 81).
3. What do you know of Virgil, Catullus, Juvenal, Fabricius, Pyrrhus, Hannibal, Semiramis, Socrates? In what connections are they mentioned here?
4. Explain: "Attic genias," "Tuscan diviners," "the sword of Mars," "the land of the Cimmerians."
5. Apply to the narrative these sayings:
  - (a) "Ages of prosperity were sacrificed to a moment of glory."
  - (b) "Genius and learning were incapable of moving a fierce unlettered soldier."
  - (c) "The most absolute power is a weak defence against the effects of despair."

## QUESTIONS

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(d) "A people whose habitations might be doubtfully assigned to the earth or water."

6. Define :—Specious (31. 24), arraign (32. 2), salutary (30. 23), hyperbole (25. 16), suffrage (42. 13), metaphysical (43. 1), manumission (60. 9), patrimony (60. 21), indefensible (72. 17), pusillanimous (79. 26).

7. Construct sentences in which the following words are used in such a way as to bring out their meaning :—ignominy, symmetry, evanescence, ostentation, sycophant, capitalisation, ambiguous, latent, emulation, magnanimity.

## SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS.

1. The most famous Queens of history.
2. Compare the character of Zenobia with that of some other famous Queen.
3. An imaginary visit to Palmyra.
4. Describe a Roman Triumph *as if you had seen it.*
5. The character of Julian as gathered from his words and actions.
6. Account for the degeneracy of the Romans in 400 A.D.
7. A visit to Rome in 400 A.D.
8. Compare the Rome of 410 with the London of 1910.
9. What class does Gibbon regard as the most useful part of the community? Why was Rome without it?
10. Give an account of Attila in your own words.
11. A short poem on the foundation of Venice.
12. Give the fable of the Seven Sleepers in your own words, and mention any other stories of which it reminds you.
13. A sonnet on the Seven Sleepers.

## PASSAGES SUITABLE FOR LEARNING BY HEART.

38. 9-29. "While Julian . . . break of day."
41. 3-42. 9. "Friends and . . . stroke of fate."
68. 12-69. 6. "When they were . . . trembled and retired."
74. 20-75. 12. "Three months . . . ruins of Aquileia."
82. 16-83. 9. "His body was . . . Roman emperor."
86. 17-end. "We imperceptibly . . . and Africa."

## HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY.

### I. For Gibbon's life :

- . His own *Memoirs of my Life and Writings*.
- Life by J. C. Morrison in *English Men of Letters Series*.

II. The best edition of the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is Prof. Bury's (Methuen, 7 vols., 6s. each; also a more expensive illustrated edition). The cheap reprint in Methuen's *Standard Library* (1s. net each vol.) contains the notes of this edition, but not the maps and appendixes.

III. For a brief, comprehensive survey of the period, A. J. Grant's *Outlines of European History* (Longmans); J. H. Robinson's *Introduction to the History of Western Europe* (Ginn); or P. V. N. Myers' *General History* (Ginn), will be found useful.

IV. Gardner, *Julian the Philosopher*. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*. H. Bradley, *The Goths* ("Story of the Nations"). Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*.

V. Aubrey de Vere (the elder), drama of *Julian the Apostate*. Matthew Arnold's Rugby prize-poem, *Alaric at Rome*. George Meredith's poem, *The Nuptials of Attila*.



